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INFANT BAPTISM SCRIPTURAL,

ESPECIALLY AS VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH THE SCRIPTURE
DOCTRINE OF GENERAL REDEMPTION :

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
REMARKS CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION
OF THAT HOLY ORDINANCE
IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

BY
WILLIAM J. SHREWSBURY,
WESLEYAN MINISTER.

"Behold ! all souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of
the son is mine ;" Ezekiel xviii. 4.

"Who *gave himself a ransom for all*, to be testified in due time ;" 1 Tim. ii. 6.

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TO

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

ATTENDING

THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST MINISTRY,

IN

THE BRADFORD EAST CIRCUIT,

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

THEIR CHRISTIAN PASTOR,

W. J. SHREWSBURY.

CHAPEL-HOUSE,
EASTBROOK, July 1st, 1841.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Many books have been written on the subject brought under discussion in the following Treatise ; but the Author has not met with any exactly suited to the circumstances of the people of his charge. And having been requested by several of them to draw up a scriptural and compendious account of Christian Baptism, for their instruction, guidance, and comfort, he has cheerfully consented ; and leaves with them this fruit of his labours, accompanied with unceasing prayer for their stability, in all holiness, righteousness, and truth.

W. J. S.



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PART I.

INFANT BAPTISM SCRIPTURAL.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL AND INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

In a Treatise of a somewhat controversial nature, professedly based on the Holy Scriptures, it is of the highest importance, both to the writer and his readers, that they seek in the first place to be thoroughly imbued with that Christian love towards all saints which is every where commanded in the pure word of God. To promote an object so desirable, and so essential to our salvation, there are two portions of the inspired volume that should be constantly kept in view; the one is St. Paul's beautiful description of Charity, in 1 Cor. xiii, and the other his exhortations to Christian moderation, in Romans, xiv. Influenced by the spirit enjoined in those scriptures, controversy, *when a duty*, may be entered on without contention, and maintained without asperity. *Plain things*, bearing hard on an opponent's views or practice, may be advanced, without the slightest feeling of unkindness towards him; and may be received by him as merely the expression of earnest conviction, and zeal for the truth, without enkindling anger or ill will in his breast. Were religious controversies, when unavoidable, thus managed; and were they to cease to be *religious*

disputes, the world would have no great occasion to scoff at our differences of opinion, for they would see that the bond of our union lay deep in “the hidden man of the heart,” 1 Pet. 3, 4 ; and that we were, for all holy, practical, and saving purposes, really “made perfect in one ;” John, xvii. 23.

As a means of promoting this blessed spiritual union, let it be here remarked that even where the differences of the Christian world are the greatest, and, in some respects, *very important too* ; still, in all those who “hold the Head,” Col. ii. 19, those differences do but relate to the *circumstantials*, and not to the *essentials* of Christianity. To apply this observation to the case of the Baptists and other Christian Churches. We differ in regard to Baptism ; but still, what are we ? *Not enemies* :—the world and sin are our mutual foes ; but “all we are brethren,” Matt. xxiii. 8. We have not two Christs, but one only Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in whom we believe ; nor two Holy Spirits, but one only Divine and Eternal Spirit by whom we are sanctified ; nor two Fathers, but “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all,” Ephes. iv. 6 ; nor have we two Bibles, but one only blessed book of pure inspiration, to which as by common consent we appeal, and all of us so heartily, that our very differences make us set a higher value on the undivided and unchangeable authority of the written word of God. With so many points of agreement, and most unhesitating concord on these grand, and glorious, and divine, and saving truths, we may be well content occasionally to meet together under the shadow of the cross,—the hallowed spot where all estrangement of heart melts away,—and there pour out with one heart and voice the

united prayer, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," Ephes. vi. 24.

Considering however the relative position of the Christian Churches in this neighbourhood, much as we may desire to cultivate a fraternal union, a sort of occasional collision can scarcely be avoided. A knowledge of this beforehand should make all parties doubly watchful over their own hearts, and always prayerful for a Christian temper, lest at any time their common enemy should gain an advantage over them. In this part of the kingdom Baptist opinions have been widely disseminated. Not a few members of the Wesleyan Methodist Societies are the descendants of pious Baptists; and in the course of pastoral visitation it has been ascertained that several adult members *had never been baptized*. In one case it was discovered that a worthy man, nearly seventy years of age, and who had been for a length of time a Class Leader, had never received that ordinance. It became necessary therefore at once to contend against so great an irregularity, and to eradicate so glaring an evil as that of counting individuals as members of a Christian community, who had never been scripturally introduced, by its only initiatory rite, into the Christian Church. To remedy the evil, the following course has been adopted, as most catholic, and at the same time best suited to the circumstances in which such members were placed. In every instance the parties concerned were left to choose for themselves both the *mode* and *place* of baptism; the only thing insisted on was that obedience to the command of Christ in regard to the ordinance itself should no longer be delayed. Some preferred to receive Baptism in the Established Church; the greater part consented

to be baptized by their own Ministers, and their children with them; and one pious woman was immersed by the Baptist Minister of the place, who baptized her *for us*, along with several candidates for membership in his own church. Her motive was a godly one. Being of Baptist origin, she was several years ago awakened to a sense of her guilt in the Baptist Chapel, yet without joining the people amongst whom her parents were found; and though she had subsequently received her spiritual good in connection with the Methodists, she felt a strong desire to be baptized in the chapel where God had first brought her to repentance. And let it be recorded to the honour of the Rev. Mr. Foster, the Baptist Minister of Farsley, that when made acquainted with the whole matter, he consented to gratify her pious wishes in the most courteous, kind, and Christian manner. But her adult daughter she brought to receive Baptism in the Wesleyan Chapel at the hands of one of the Wesleyan Ministers; and the mother and her daughter went on their way rejoicing, for both modes of administration were crowned with the blessing of God.

Now though the evil complained of has thus been brought to an end in a quiet manner, without noise and observation, yet it has unavoidably led to discussions between the members of the Christian Churches who differ on several points relating to Baptism. Moreover, it is found necessary to use extreme vigilance *to prevent unbaptized adults in future* from becoming members of the Wesleyan Society; in order to which the question is often distinctly put to new candidates *as to the fact* of their Baptism; especially if family connections render it doubtful; and this needful inquiry, which can by no

means be dispensed with, keeps up a kind of secret agitation, and produces a tendency to collision. And co-operating with these unpleasant circumstances, and to be dreaded as being of far more injurious consequences, we are concerned to add, that the Wesleyans, who wish to be a quite and unoffending people, sometimes meet with religious professors who are more zealous for opinions concerning Baptism than for personal holiness. Now, as Methodists, their religious training has been almost exclusively directed to a consideration of the nature and importance of experimental and practical religion; hence expert and wordy controvertists, skilled in a particular branch of theological tactics, have an advantage over them, and occasionally produce perplexity of mind, and even trouble the conscience of the simple in heart, who desire in all things to know and do the will of God. It must be obvious then to every one that at such a time, and in such circumstances, the Wesleyan Ministers have a providential call to teach their societies and congregations what they believe to be the sense of the Holy Scriptures in regard to Christian Baptism. No man may impugn their motives, or accuse them of stirring up strife, because on such an occasion they use with moderation their Christian liberty, and faithfully and conscientiously perform their Christian duty. Unwilling to spend much time in the pulpit about matters of secondary interest, where "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts, xx. 21, have need to be preached every Sabbath-day; and yet unwilling also to leave their flock without counsel and consolation connected with these minor topics, after having once for all delivered a Discourse on Baptism, it has been deemed expedient to employ the press,

and thus embody what is necessary to be known in a permanent form, for their lasting edification. But it is earnestly desired that this little Treatise may be used *only as a shield, never as a sword*; it must be faithfully borne in mind that an understood pledge exists between us, that we will not *attack* our brethren, but merely stand on the *defensive*, and be content with maintaining our ground, without pushing at them for victory. “So shall we find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man,” Prov. iii. 4.

CHAPTER II.

THE POINTS OF DISCUSSION STATED.

It will be a blessed era for the Christian Church when all Christians shall consider how nearly they agree already, and resolve to come as much nearer as possible, rather than how much they differ, and what is the best mode of keeping entirely apart from one another. Let us see how this remark may be brought to bear on the subject about to come under review. Now in regard to Baptism, our Baptist brethren and we are agreed as to *the importance* of Baptism itself—the indispensable necessity of its being administered in the name of the Holy Trinity—the necessity also of employing water as the only element sanctioned by divine authority in its administration—and the insufficiency of the outward ordinance to effect salvation, unless the Holy Ghost be given. And to these articles of peace, proclaimed as it were on neutral ground, may be added the following admission, namely, that *we* fully agree with *them* in the opinion that *unbaptized adults* ought to manifest personal repentance and faith before they are admitted to Baptism ;—only let them allow us to guard this admission by putting our own sense on the term unbaptized, according to the current phraseology of the Churches which practise Infant Baptism. Now let us rejoice to know that we are so far one in judgment, and that it is our common aim to establish these all-important truths connected with Baptism, since

these truths are so essential to vital godliness, and the maintenance of Christ's holy religion on the earth.

If we come to examine the subject yet more accurately, it will be found that we and our Baptist brethren may draw considerably nearer each other still. It has generally been stated that we are for *Infant* and they for *Adult* Baptism; and thus the chasm between us has appeared wider than necessary, or than the truth will justify. For there is solid reason to conclude from the piety prevalent in the Baptist Churches, and even from the known principles on which they so strenuously insist with regard to Baptism, that the Ministers of those Churches would not refuse to baptize *youths*, and even *children of tender years*, if they gave evidence of a sincere faith in Christ, and early devotedness to the service of God. Such young persons for instance as are mentioned in that excellent little book, "Janeway's Tokens for Children," they probably would not refuse to admit by immersion into the outward and visible Church of Christ. We have never heard that the Baptist Churches have fixed any particular *age* or *period* of life, prior to the attainment of which no one can be associated with them in Christian fellowship; but only that they insist that those whom they receive should give evidence of *personal faith* in Christ, and then be baptized according to the mode which they account to be the only true outward baptism. Now this is a very material point, and considerably reduces the controversy within narrower limits; for strictly speaking it is not a matter of dispute relating to *Infants* and *Adults*, but to *Infants* and *very young children*, before they are of a sufficient age personally to distinguish between good and evil, and *children* who having reached that age may

evinced gracious dispositions, and be strongly inclined to the fear and love of God. Our Baptist brethren are of opinion that until they in this sense at least come of age, and personally choose Christ for their Saviour;—or, until that period of life arrives when such choice is made in riper years, no one ought to be baptized, and thereby admitted as a member of a Christian Church: on the contrary we are of opinion that *Infants* have a right of admission into Christ's Church *from their very earliest infancy*, and that in consequence of that admission, they are *bound by special obligation*, from the time they can distinguish between good and evil, to choose knowledge and the fear of the Lord; and in this opinion we have the general concurrence of Christian Churches in almost all ages of the world.

This is the topic then on which we are principally at issue. There is a *minor subject* on which we also differ, namely, as to the *mode* of baptizing, which will be subsequently explained. For the present we confine ourselves to the *chief subject* of controversy. We assume the pleasing task of advocating the cause of very little children and infants, and maintain with earnestness on their behalf, their *right* and *title* to an admission into Christ's Church, because we believe it to be their *birthright*, yea, their *sacred birthright*, of which therefore no man may *escheat* them; because it hath been secured unto them by God himself, according to the revelation of his own will, which he hath made known to mankind in the Holy Scriptures.

There are three *Scripture Facts* which establish our position;—at least they appear to us to be *Facts*:—and if we can really prove them to be *Facts*, and not mere *notions* or *theories*, then is our position in our judgment

invulnerable, securing to us the joyful assurance that every attempt to call the Church Universal off from the principles and practice of Infant Baptism, must prove a general failure. We shall dispose of them in the following order.

First Fact :—Infants are redeemed by Jesus Christ ; therefore in virtue of an actually existing relation between Christ and them from their birth, which relation is gracious, and founded in grace, they have a right to be dedicated to God in the initiatory ordinance of Baptism, and to be received as members of his visible Church on earth.

Second Fact :—Infants were dedicated to God for *four thousand years*, from the creation of the world, to the coming of Christ ;—therefore we conclude that Infants have a right to a similar privilege under the Christian Dispensation, according to the entire scope and tenor of God's covenant with mankind.

Third Fact :—Infant Baptism is sanctioned by the principles, incidental occurrences, and spirit of the New Testament records, viewed in their connection with the preceding revelations of God's will, as made known in the Old Testament ;—therefore a right to Baptism is secured to Infants in perpetuity in the Gospel of God our Saviour.

We have thus brought into the foreground, and exhibited at one view, the strength of our cause ; that, before we enter into detail, it may be seen, examined, and reflected on, and the force of it duly considered ; and as much as may be apart from prejudices and prepossessions of mind, which often hinder men from discovering and receiving the truth of God. No reasoning can stand against Facts ; therefore, as we have now put the matter, the only questionable or debateable ground is, whether

what we have assumed to be Facts be so in reality, or nothing more than doctrinal opinions, and as such entitled to *respect*, because associated with a large portion of divine truth, but not worthy of being received as *authority*, from which there lies no appeal. It becomes then our duty to shew by what process we arrive at the conclusion that the three propositions just laid down may be truly called Scriptural Facts ; which, that we may do with the greater distinctness, we shall treat of them one by one in three separate Chapters.

CHAPTER III.

~~~~~  
 INFANTS OUGHT TO BE BAPTIZED, BECAUSE THEY  
 HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.  
 ~~~~~

Redemption lies at the foundation of all human hope and happiness, both of this life and of that which is to come. Now the arguments which go to prove the important fact of the redemption of *all Infants* are *these three* :—

First, The very terms and tenor of the Covenant of Redemption :

Secondly, The express declarations of God's holy word concerning the extent of human redemption ; and

Thirdly, The consequences flowing from Redemption and which evidently affect all mankind.

Of these in order.

SECTION I.

That Infants are redeemed is evident from the terms and tenor of the Covenant of Redemption.

The relation in which man stands to God is of a very peculiar and sacred kind, the like to which doth not appear to subsist between God Almighty and any other creatures which he hath made. In consequence of his fall, through disobedience to the divine law, from that state of holiness and happiness in which God originally created him, as is related by Moses in the third chapter of Genesis, he became obnoxious to the divine displeasure,

and exposed to the danger of everlasting death. But God in his infinite mercy had compassion on him, and provided a method for his preservation in being for a season, and for his ultimate pardon, recovery, and eternal salvation, in and through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who should appear in due time, and be offered up as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;” John, i. 29. By virtue of this intended sacrifice and atonement, God entered into a new engagement with man, which engagement partook of the nature of a covenant, and because of its being based on the redemption of Christ, it is called the covenant of redemption. For without redemption it could have had no place, since the parties concerned were at variance; for what *sinner* could approach unto the holy Lord God and live? Wherefore there was a Mediator needed, and one was found in the person of the Son of God, who alone was and is able to perfect the great work of reconciling guilty man to God. So saith the Apostle, in words that are quite as applicable to the first sinners as to us:—“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” 2 Cor. v. 19. He did not so impute their trespasses to them as to shut them out of all hope of his mercy, but even then, through that same Christ who died upon the cross for sin, he proffered them reconciliation through faith in his name. So early was Jesus manifested, although with less glory than to us, as the Mediator of the Covenant; and when “the Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them,” Gen. iii. 21, he taught them how to “make a covenant with him by sacrifice,” Psalm l. 5; and this knowledge, essential to salvation, they transmitted to their posterity, as appears

from the offerings they early brought to the altar of the Lord; Gen. iv. 3, 4. And although God afterwards made a covenant with Noah, with Abraham, and with Israel by the hand of Moses, yet those successive covenants of the bow, and of circumcision, and of the law, were not made separate from this his original covenant with mankind in Christ, but in connection with it, and as portions of it, and with the design of bringing forth before the children of men clearer and clearer manifestations of the manifold benefits and blessings of that his eternal covenant, which should never pass away. And therefore St. Paul calls the promises given to Abraham a "*confirming* of God's covenant in Christ," as of a thing which already existed, and which the law could not disannul, nor any subsequent dispensation under the law cause to cease to be; Gal. iii. 17.

In the prophetic ages the same truth was clearly revealed. To this doctrine David gave witness when he spake in his "last words" of "*an everlasting covenant*, ordered in all things and sure, which was all his salvation and all his desire;" 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. In like manner Jehovah spake thus by his servant Isaiah concerning Christ the Lord: "I will give thee for a *covenant* of the people," that is, for Israel, and "for a light of the Gentiles;" Isaiah, xlii. 6; which words good old Simeon turned into a song, when he held the Redeemer of the Covenant in his arms, saying,—"*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word,*"—by Isaiah—"for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;" and then, almost literally quoting the Prophet, he adds,—"*a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy*

people Israel ;" Luke, ii. 29—32.—Malachi likewise speaks thus,—“ Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even *the messenger of the covenant*, whom ye delight in, saith the Lord of Hosts ;" Mal. iii. 1. To the same effect, and explanatory of Malachi, Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, spake, when he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,—“ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, *which have been since the world began* : That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us : To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, *and to remember his holy covenant* ; The oath which he sware to our father Abraham," &c. ; Luke i. 68—73.—And because the death of Christ was necessary to his redemption and mediation, he established a perpetual sign thereof in the Lord's Supper, and designated the cup containing the wine, “ the cup of the *new testament*" or *covenant*, Luke xxii. 20. For the same reason St. Paul styles Jesus “ the Mediator of the *new covenant* ;" Heb. xii. 24 ; and concludes that same Epistle with the following prayer, “ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*, make you perfect," &c., Heb. xiii. 20, 21.—These Scriptures may suffice to show the real existence of a covenant between God and man ; that it has subsisted in all ages, and is entirely of mercy, and that it is founded on the redemption of the only Saviour,

Jesus Christ the Lord. Our old Divines some generations back were wont to speak of the covenant of works, and of the covenant of grace ; but it doth not appear from scripture that there ever hath been more than one kind of Covenant, for that to a Covenant *sacrifice essentially* belongs. God indeed gave to man *law* in the beginning, and required *obedience* as the sole condition of his continued happiness, so that he was placed under *the law* of works, but not under *a covenant* of works, according to the proper scriptural notion of a Covenant, for nothing of that kind was known, till after the transgression, when God established with man his divine and eternal covenant of grace.

Now the grand *characteristic* of this one divine and eternal covenant of God with man is *its universality* ; for it comprehended the whole human family, and *of course all infants* ; and it established a new and gracious relation between God and all mankind, as it is written, "The Lord is good to all ; and his tender mercies are over all his works ;" Psalm cxlv. 9. And because this was the character of the covenant, therefore the *terms* and *tenor* of the covenant were couched in language fully expressive of this its leading feature ; so that the renewal of that covenant in various forms, age after age, was but a further development of *its universal benignity* towards the children of men. To set the whole in a clear light, we may classify our remarks under the following divisional arrangement of this section. We may notice first, The *time* when the covenant of grace was revealed : Secondly, The *type* with whom the eternal Mediator of the Covenant, *as the Antitype*, corresponded : Thirdly, The successive manifestations of grace in which it was renewed :

and Fourthly, The actual appearing of Jesus Christ for the redemption of mankind.

First, The era of the Covenant. Now as to the time when God originally revealed his covenant of redemption to men, there exists neither doubt nor difficulty, if we receive the testimony God himself has given. For without going back to the ages of eternity, concerning which God has revealed nothing relative to this subject, it is sufficient for us to know that it was first announced to man in the glorious primeval promise,—“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed ; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ;” Gen. iii. 15. To whom was that Promise given ? To the sinful pair in the garden of Eden. Now that promise was made *before they had posterity born*, as we conclude from the fact, that the man and his wife were *the only persons* driven out of the garden, Gen. iii. 22—24. Moreover, the words immediately following the promise imply as much ;—“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ;” Gen. iii. 16 ; especially when coupled with the words with which the next chapter begins, “And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived,” &c., Gen. iv. 1. The Facts of the case therefore with regard to Adam and his posterity, according to the inspired historian, stand thus. Man sinned before any posterity were born. Yet we know, from revelation and experience, that his sin hath affected all mankind, both temporally and spiritually, so that in reference to that original transgression it is said, “all have sinned ;” Rom v. 12. But as none of mankind were yet born, they could have no otherwise sinned than as being seminally contained in him their progenitor. But then

*they were equally, and in the same sense, contained in him when the promise was given, and he was brought into a covenant relation to God, by and through the Redeemer ; so that they were brought into the same relation also. Consequently they were not born into the world under the old Adamic law of Eden, which was only suited to the condition of a perfect and an upright creature, but under the gracious economy of mercy, which was thenceforwards substituted for it, and is suited to the fallen and miserable condition of a guilty world. In what respects soever the Progenitor was benefited, in the same respects his race were benefited also, but no further. The sentence of death was passed upon his body, yet he was spared for a season ; and they also are mortal, yet, when born, reprieved for so many days or years as it pleaseth the Lord of all to assign them. In regard to him it was ordained that for that offence he should never die eternally, provided he repented thereof, and of his sinfulness, and became an obedient believer in the woman's promised seed, and sought for mercy through that future sacrifice for sin, according to the conditions of the covenant of peace : and in regard to mankind it was also ordained that they should not be in any wise affected by that sin in eternity, provided they also repented of their natural sinfulness, as did David, saying,—“ Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me ;” Psalm li. 5 ; and became penitent likewise for their actual and personal transgressions, and sought by faith for “ redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ;” Ephes. i. 7. The performance, however, of these personal acts of repentance and faith, should depend on a *capability* of*

performing them ; otherwise, as in the case of Infants and Idiots, mercy should be extended towards them without that performance, in consequence of their relation to Jesus Christ the covenant Saviour of mankind ;—according to the general rule of equity in the divine government implied in that inquiry—“ Shall not the judge of all the earth do right ?” Gen. xviii. 25. Thus we see that as mankind fell *in* Adam, so *in* Adam they were partially restored, they being as much *in* him when the promise of life was given, as they were when the sentence of death was passed, in consequence of his partaking of the fruit of that tree, concerning which God had said, “ Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die ;” Gen. iii. 5.

But, notwithstanding this gracious and equitable correspondence between the Fall and the Restoration of Man, there was one vast difference between the Fall and the Redemption of mankind, which must be most carefully observed. All men not only fell *in* Adam, but also *by* him ; whereas though they were restored *in* him, and *together with him*, in the same hour when the era of grace began, yet they were not restored *by* him, either in whole or in part, but *solely by Christ*, without whom not one soul could be saved, but through whom all souls might be saved. Therefore when Adam was restored, he was not constituted a second time the Head and Representative of the human race, though he of course remained their natural Father ; but Jesus Christ himself became the federal Head and Representative of mankind, for which reason he is called “ the last Adam,” and “ the second man, the Lord from heaven ;” 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. And indeed he may be justly called “ the *second* man,” not only because of his being our *second Head*, but also

because of his *early engagement* to become such, he may be regarded as the second man *in point of time*; for though he were not incarnate till many ages had passed away, and the world was fully prepared for his appearing, yet he was *the seed promised before* man's posterity had been either begotten or born. And he is also "the *last Adam*;" since, though he succeeded in his representative character to another, none other shall ever succeed to him, for "Christ who *came in the flesh*, is over all, God blessed *for ever*;" Rom. ix. 5.

We see, therefore, that our common progenitor lost *his representative glory* entirely by the Fall; nor, however penitent and believing he might become, was he afterwards constituted, even in a subordinate sense, the Head of the believing portion of mankind; that honour was reserved for one of a later age, that is, faithful Abraham, who is denominated, under Christ, "the father of all them that believe, so that they, whether Jews or Gentiles, are reckoned as his seed;" Rom. iv. 10—25; and Gal. iii. 5—29. But as to the original offender, henceforwards, in his new state of probation, he stood or fell alone: if he further sinned, that sin would not affect his posterity, as his original sin had done; and, if he were believing and obedient, his faith and obedience would not contribute to their advantage, *in the same sense* that his original obedience would have done, however serviceable it might be to them *as an example*, in stimulating them to the like acts, necessary for them as sinners in order to their personal salvation. Therefore when mankind were thus restored *in Adam by Christ*, man being now only the *Progenitor*, but not the *Representative*, of his race, it follows that he could only communicate to them, in the

way of ordinary generation, that which was properly *his own*, and not that which was another's; a *sinful man* could only beget a *sinful race*, and a *mortal man* a *mortal race*. Hence the universality of the principle of degeneracy in human nature, as stated by our blessed Lord,—“That which is born of the flesh is flesh;” John iii. 6. The holiest parents cannot beget a ‘godly seed; they can but transmit *their nature, not their grace*, that cometh in every instance immediately from God. To this purpose it is written, “And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son *in his own likeness, after his image*; and called his name Seth;” Gen. v. 3. Seth was a pious man, and with him began a pious line; for which reason, perhaps, the remark is made rather concerning him than the earlier sons of Adam, to teach us that though Adam was a true worshipper of God, and had instructed his family in the true religion, as may be inferred from Gen. iv. 3, 4, yet he did not convey godliness to Seth, or to any of his seed; but that for any, and for every, degree of grace, they were as absolutely dependent on the promised Redeemer, by whom restoration and salvation came, as Adam himself had been from the awful moment of his fall.

Now, according to these views of divine truth, which, we apprehend, harmonize with that entire body or system of revealed religion signified by the phrase “the analogy of faith,” Rom. xii. 6—the correspondence which one doctrine bears to another, or of fact to prophecy,—all men, and *so all infants from their birth*, are to be considered, in regard to their *moral condition*, in a *twofold relation*. First, as the natural descendants of Adam, and consequently as sinners, and because sinners, justly

subjected to pain and death, the former of which they all more or less suffer, and the latter of which comes upon many thousands of them while yet in infancy. Some are but just born to die, and know no other resting place than the grave. The light of the sun created by God, and the swaddling-clothes prepared by a mother's care, are alike made in vain for them ; and they want not a cradle but a tomb. They are mortal, because they are " by nature " sinners ; and *as such* they have forfeited every blessing, and have no more right to Baptism than they have to a continuance of that life which God in his holy justice so soon taketh away. But then, Secondly,—and this is the everlasting source of consolation,—they are no less certainly related to the second Adam, by virtue of the Covenant of Redemption, than to the first by natural descent ; and therefore it is that *as redeemed creatures*, they have *a right through Christ*, as to the kingdom of heaven, if they die in infancy, so, while yet in infancy, to an admission into his Church by Baptism, in order that they may thenceforwards be put into the most advantageous circumstances for securing a share in the spiritual blessings of his kingdom on earth, should their lives be spared, and of being brought ultimately to his kingdom of glory. To reject them *is to admit the one relation, and deny the other* ; it is to punish them as fallen creatures, and yet exclude them from the benefits of Christ's redemption, which is to separate what God hath conjoined, and is quite contrary to God's dispensation of grace to usward in Christ Jesus our Lord. To receive them by Baptism is to act according to that grace, and according to the true nature and fitness of things, since the very act of Baptism *recognizes publicly both relations at once*, just

as those relations actually exist, the water denoting the sinfulness of the child, and also the cleansing efficacy of the Holy Spirit's grace, which is to be bestowed through Christ the Saviour and Redeemer of men.

O blessed and consoling reflection for every suffering daughter of Eve, who may be destined to many labours and sorrows connected with the pains and peril of child-bearing ! Well may the mother "remember no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world;" John xvi. 21 ; for so soon as she looks upon her new-born offspring she may say, "This is my Redeemer's child ;" and the father may rejoice to know that it is entitled to the covenant sign, because it is redeemed by the blood of the covenant, and ransomed by him who is the Saviour of all generations of mankind. And in the knowledge of so divine a truth, those parents who are deprived by death of their children in infancy, have the strongest possible assurance that they "sleep in Jesus," so that instead of "sorrowing as those who have no hope," they may comfort themselves with the thought, that by taking them from the earth so early, God hath made their everlasting salvation sure.

To confirm the whole series of sacred truths which have been exhibited in the preceding pages, we shall here quote entire a passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, as it stands in the Bible, only putting in italics the emphatic words, which most directly have a bearing on the subject. "Wherefore," saith the Apostle, "*as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned* : For until the law sin was in the world ; but *sin is not imputed when there is no law*. Nevertheless death

reigned from Adam to Moses, *even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of *one many* be dead, *much more the grace of God*, and the gift by grace, which is *by one man*, Jesus Christ, hath *abounded unto many*. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if *by one man's* offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life *by one*, Jesus Christ. Therefore *as by the offence of one* judgment came upon *all men to condemnation*; *even so by the righteousness of one* the free gift came upon *all men unto justification of life*. For as—*by one man's disobedience—many—were made sinners,—so—by the obedience—of one—shall many—be made righteous*. Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord;" Rom. v. 12—21.

Now throughout this portion of Holy Writ there is a continual contrast exhibited between the one man, Adam, and the one man, Christ; the offence, the sin of one; and the obedience, the righteousness of the other; the judgment, the condemnation, the death, resulting from the transgression of Adam; and the righteousness, the justification, the life, resulting from the obedience of Christ: the many, the all men that were brought into condemnation by one; and the many, the all men, that

were brought to possess the justification of life through the other man, Christ Jesus: and finally, the contrast is most strongly marked by comparing the fatal consequences flowing from one sin, with the much mightier consequences flowing from redemption, which leads to the remission of many offences, yea, of offences without number, whereby the grace of God is so highly exalted in and through Jesus Christ our Lord. Moreover, in two other respects, the glorious work of redemption is magnified. For first the Apostle shews that the punishment of sin is limited in its duration, in regard to those who do not "receive the grace of God in vain," for though even in regard to them, sin still reigns unto death, that is, *temporal death*, yet there is placed in direct opposition thereto, not life merely, but *eternal life*, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And secondly, a special clause in favour of Infants is interwoven with the argument, for to Infants do those words appear to belong, when the Apostle mentions "them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," that is, personally and voluntarily; and therefore—though because of their sinful descent, and consequent sinfulness of nature—sin reigned over them also unto death from Adam to Moses, as from Moses to the present day, yet, in their case, where sin abounded grace did much more abound, in the bestowment of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus as in all things Christ hath the pre-eminence, so in particular in this his representative character. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit"—a quickening spirit to those who lay under sentence of death. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which

is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven ;" 1 Cor. xv. 45—47. Now as Christ assumed the representative character in the very garden of Eden itself, where the original sin was committed, and as he must in all things have the pre-eminence, so it is evident that when the representative Headship passed from Adam to Christ, it was not shorn of its glory by being limited in its influence and design, but still had its original character of *universality*. This most conspicuously appears in the *original promise*, and in the *time* and *manner* of giving it, when God at the first promulgated his gracious covenant of redemption on behalf of all mankind. And as a conclusion to the whole subject, on which we have dwelt at so much length, we may cite the words of David in the eighth Psalm, for they belong to the second man, and yet contain a beautiful allusion to the original glory of the first Adam. " For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under his feet : All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field : The fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas ;" Psalm viii. 5—8. Now these words are expressly applied to Christ by St. Paul, Heb. ii. 7, 8, and they belong to Christ *in his human nature*, as the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind. And shall the sovereignty of his manhood, inseparably connected as it is with his essentially divine and eternal Godhead, *be less than universal, as to the special object for which it was assumed, Redemption ?* Shall his dominion be over all the fishes of

the sea, the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and yet *his redemption*, for the sake of which he became man, and without which, *as man*, he would have had no dominion over them at all, *be restricted to a part of mankind*. Assuredly not : for in the very scripture in which St. Paul applies the above words of David, he adds, immediately after the quotation, “ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour ; *that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man ;*” Heb. ii. 9. So then the covenant grace promised, Gen. iii. 15, was fulfilled when Christ the Covenant Head died upon the cross for the redemption of all mankind. Therefore the divine chorus with which David begins and ends his psalm belongs to all ages :—“ O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth ;” Psalm viii. 1—9. —Thus far of *the era* of the Covenant in proof of its *universality*.

2. The Type of the Covenant. This topic may be treated with brevity, as it has been already in substance anticipated. Yet there is a particular phrase in the Text before quoted from the Romans, which, as confirmatory of the great Scripture Fact of General Redemption, deserves distinct consideration. It is this,—“ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, *who is the figure*”—literally, “ *who is the type of him that was to come.*” Now there cannot possibly be any doubt as to the persons spoken of in these words. The relative, “ who,” is so closely connected with the person, Adam, mentioned just before, as to preclude mistake. As to the other expression, “ him that was to come,” it

belonged to Christ, and to none else, which scarcely needs proving, for it was a common appellation amongst the Jews for the Messiah : see Matt. xi. 3. And it is here peculiarly appropriate, shewing as it were from the very time of Adam's transgression, all the hopes of mankind were thrown forwards on futurity, in expectation of that great Deliverer who had been promised from the beginning, and whose atonement was at once so certain and so valuable, that its benefits were enjoyed before it was actually made, so that virtually he was regarded as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ;" Rev. xiii. 8. Moreover, in the whole passage there are but *two* individuals spoken of by way of eminence, and the one continually contrasted with the other, as has been before shewn, namely, Adam and Christ, and so of consequence, if in this passage "who" refers to Adam, the other expression, "him that was to come," must belong solely to Christ Jesus. The case then stands thus. Adam is here declared by an inspired writer to be *the type of Christ*. Now then the question occurs, *In what respect is Adam the type of Christ ?* For it must be observed that the verb is in the present tense. All other types have passed away with the abrogation of the Jewish ritual and the ceremonial law, but this continueth in its correspondence the one to the other, even under the Christian Dispensation, and will so continue till the end of time, when the first man will be raised and appear before the judgment seat with all his family as their natural head, and Christ will sit upon his throne as the sole and universal Judge. In what respect then, we ask again, *is Adam the type of Christ ?* Not in obedience, for he was disobedient ; not in righteousness, for he was guilty ; not in procuring life,

for death came by him ; not at all in personal excellence, moral worth, or virtuous acts, for in all these respects he was the very reverse of Christ, and so could be no type of him. There is but one thing in which this figurative or typical character will at all apply, and that is, *in universality* ;—here, and here only, is the correspondence between the first and second Adam fairly borne out ; and hence the propriety of the parallel drawn by the Apostle between the miseries, and ruin, and death, brought upon us by the former, and the righteousness, grace, and life, procured for us by the latter. But this universality comprehends the redemption of all Infants, and yields undeniable evidence that they are Christ's property from their birth, not only because he hath created them, but also because he hath purchased them with his precious blood. Thus type and antitype perfectly agree ; that presignified a certain fact, and this shews the fact to have been really brought to pass, and to be now in perpetual existence, exactly as it had been presignified ; so that though Adam were not counted a Prophet, he himself stood in the place of prophecy, and became a type or figure of “ the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world ;” John i. 29.

3. The successive manifestations of the grace of God to the children of men next claim our attention, in all of which the prominent facts of Redemption, and of a Covenant, and of universality as belonging thereto, will uniformly appear. For the sake of distinctness and arrangement we may take up the two most remarkable periods which have distinguished the history of mankind : the times of Noah and Abraham, which latter period continued until Christ.

The earliest covenant which God made with man after the deluge, when Noah and his family had come out of the ark, is thus recorded by Moses. "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, and of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth;" Gen. ix. 8—17.

Now concerning this Noahic covenant much might be written were it alone the subject of discussion; but as it is merely introduced in connection with a chain of truths, and as subservient to a general design, two observations may suffice. In the first place, it is clear, that

this covenant was a part, and a continuation, of the original covenant of Redemption, *for it was founded on it*, and is therefore by no means to be regarded as a manifestation of the divine goodness *wholly new in principle*, notwithstanding the extraordinary events in which it originated. Hence it was preceded by sacrifices similar to those which had been appointed from the beginning, so that neither was that “covenant made without blood ;” see Gen. viii. 20—22. “And Noah *buildded an altar* unto the Lord ; and took of *every clean beast*, and of *every clean fowl*, and *offered burnt offerings on the altar*. And the Lord *smelled a sweet savour* ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake,” &c. Here was a most solemn, devout, and religious transaction, which could in no wise be acceptably entered upon without faith in the promised seed, which faith connects the whole Noahic covenant with the great work of redemption. Now Noah, St. Paul assures us, was, “an heir of the righteousness which is by faith ;” Heb. xi. 7. Moreover this covenant was manifestly *gracious*, and *full of promise*, and looked forward to the remotest ages of time with benignity ; so that from its *gracious character* we may be convinced of its sure association with redemption, for it is only in Christ that God sheweth grace to the children of men. And to mark still more clearly the connection of this covenant with the first and former promises of divine mercy, immediately after the acceptance of Noah’s sacrifice, there followed a renewal of the divine blessing, in which was embodied the very language of God’s primeval promise to man in a state of rectitude, and also a reference to the change in his condition. “And God blessed Noah and

his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein:" Gen. ix. 1—7. Then, after the establishing of the covenant with Noah, there was vouchsafed unto him the Spirit of Prophecy, whereby he was enabled to foretel in few words a continuous chain of events relating to his posterity, which should begin to be accomplished at no remote period, and run on in fulfilment, under various aspects, and different degrees of modification, to the latest ages of the world; Gen. ix. 24—27. It is impossible to take this brief, yet comprehensive view of the entire transaction, and not feel convinced that the covenant of the bow with Noah was but a further development of the everlasting covenant of redemption in Christ, for which reason it must be reckoned a continuation and a portion of it, suited to the peculiar providential condition of mankind, just then emerging from the desolating storms of divine vengeance against the ungodly, to witness that even in wrath, God, for the Re-

deemer's sake, remembereth mercy. Wherefore in the Apocalyptic Vision of that Redeemer with which John was favoured in Patmos, in allusion to this ancient event, which gathered all its grace and glory from redemption, Christ was seen encircled with a splendid bow,—his mediatorial throne placed as it were beneath the centre of its vast arch in the heavens. “And immediately,” saith the Apostle, “I was in the spirit; and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone, *and there was a rainbow round about the throne*, in sight like unto an emerald;” Rev. iv. 2, 3. In like manner, many ages before, Ezekiel beheld a similar vision; for John in the Apocalypse is the best expositor of Ezekiel and Daniel, so that the three books should be read together, and diligently compared for mutual illustration. Ezekiel beheld a throne, and one sat upon it whose “likeness was *as the appearance of a man*,” and, after describing his personal glory, he adds, there was also “*as the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain*, so was the appearance of the brightness round about the throne.” “This,” says he, “*was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*,” Ezek. i 26—28. Let these Scriptures be all brought together, and examined as a whole, and it will be evident, not only that Noah's covenant was *founded in grace*, and therefore took its origin in *Redemption*, but also, that this was *distinctly perceived and most fully understood to be the case by the Church in all ages, as well by the Prophets as by the Apostles*. If any thing more be wanting to confirm this deeply interesting and important truth, it may be found in the beautiful language of the

Prophet Isaiah, who brings together in one consolidated promise the covenant blessings of far distant dispensations of grace. Thus saith the Lord, to the apparently neglected Gentiles, now called to be his people in the latter days by the gospel: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, *saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee;*" Isaiah liv. 7—10.

Now as it is thus demonstrated that Noah's covenant was founded on the covenant of redemption, which is called by Isaiah, as just quoted,—*"the covenant of peace,"*—so that covenant of Noah had in it the grand characteristic of the redemption covenant—*universality*. How plainly is this implied in the following words:—"And God spake unto Noah, *and to his sons*, saying,—And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, *and with your seed after you,*" Gen. ix. 8, 9,—that is, with all mankind, all of whom are Noah's seed, seeing that none beside his family,—*"that is, eight souls were saved,"* 1 Pet. iii. 20, from perishing in the waters of the flood. And so far was God from limiting this branch of his redemption covenant to *a portion* of mankind, that it pleased him rather to include within some share of its benefits, so far as their natures rendered them capable of partaking thereof,

even the brute creation. And it is manifest that all mankind are benefited by that covenant, for by virtue of it the earth continueth to this day, and “seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night do not cease ;” Gen. viii. 22. Wherefore, seeing *all* the blessings of the covenant, both temporal and spiritual, *flow from one source,—redemption ;* (for as to spiritual blessings, that is too evident to be denied ; and as to temporal blessings, that is too plain to be doubted, *because they are expressly enumerated as covenant blessings ;*) and seeing also that the covenant cannot be *at variance with itself, in temporal things, universal, and in spiritual things, exclusive,* it necessarily follows that it embraces within its range of mercy every human soul, which, however, it could not do, if Jesus, “by the grace of God had not tasted death for every man ;” Heb. ii. 9. And this brings us to the same point again, All Infants are the “children of the covenant,” and were included in this branch of it made with Noah, equally with their fathers, because both they and their fathers are the redeemed of the Lord. Even *the visible token of the bow* implied the *universality* of the covenant, for its beautiful arch, built in the skies, seems to embrace the whole earth, when it extends itself in the open firmament of heaven. Nor is its appearance confined to one age, or to one country, but it is beheld in every country, and in every age, and is witnessed by all generations of mankind : nor are infants considered *unfit subjects* to smile beneath its radiancy, or incapable of being preserved and benefited by it, *because* their infant mind perceives not the beauty of its colours, nor understands the nature and significance of its splendid and gracious sign. What then ? The

God of mercy has always loved Infants, and admitted them through Christ the Redeemer to a share of the rights, privileges, and blessings of *whatever covenant* he hath made with the children of men.

The next Covenant Era brings us to the days of the Patriarch Abraham, when circumcision was appointed as a new rite to be observed by him and his descendants in their future generations. On the law of circumcision we shall not dwell at present, as it will come under review in a subsequent portion of this Treatise. Suffice it to remark here, that, notwithstanding the *peculiarities* of the Abrahamic Covenant, according to God's purpose of raising up one nation above all others to be his chosen people, still there was nothing in it contrary to *the character of universality* belonging to the original covenant of redemption, and developed in the dispensation of grace to Noah, of which the covenant made with Abraham was an enlargement, securing to him and a particular branch of his family certain *peculiar* privileges, yet *without diminishing any thing* from the common right and privilege of all mankind to those blessings which had been promised them from the beginning, by the mercy of God. On the contrary, along with the peculiar privileges granted to Israel there was *guaranteed* to all nations *their redemption, as well as Israel's*, by Christ, the Saviour of the world. For he who said to Abraham, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," Gen. xxi. 12, said also to him, when he offered up Isaac on the altar, "And in thy seed *shall all the nations of the earth* be blessed;" Gen. xxii. 18. Yea, and at the very time circumcision was established, there was a change made in the Patriarch's name, which denoted that the Jewish election was not the reprobation

of the world, but a continuation of the great purpose of God in Christ to reconcile the world unto himself; even as one individual may sometimes be chosen in a family to hold for a season the title-deeds of an inheritance, as a better means of preserving them in security for all the rest, than any other which can be devised. This certainly confers on such an one an honour and a pre-eminence, but does not *deprive them* of any right or blessing. So God said to Abram, “As for me, behold my covenant *is with thee*, and thou shalt be a father of *many nations*. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be *Abraham*; *for a father of many nations have I made thee* ;” Gen. xvii. 4, 5. And thus it is evident, notwithstanding the *apparent* exclusiveness of the Jewish Covenant, it did in reality look beyond its own narrow limits to gospel times, when the Messiah should appear to be the Saviour of the world. .

Moreover, there is one fact deeply interesting to mankind, that is commonly overlooked, or at least superficially noticed, although it is distinctly and repeatedly mentioned in the Mosaic records. It is this. A large portion of the Gentiles were incorporated with the Jews, and this Gentile union *was wrought up with the whole framework of the Jewish economy*, so that every part of the Jewish system, and the whole of the Jewish history, proclaimed that God was not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles, while a *precedence*, a *priority* of privileges was secured to the Jews, until the coming of Christ, when that also was to be done away. From the commencement, the Abrahamic Covenant took in *all* Abraham’s posterity, as well Ishmael as Isaac; and *all* his household, as well his Gentile servants, as God’s own

chosen seed by Sarah. And indeed the former were far more numerous than the latter; for they were many, amounting to some hundreds at least, see Gen. xiv. 14, whereas Isaac was but one, as though it were intimated from the beginning that "more should be the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife," as was afterwards foretold; Isaiah liv. 1. And when Moses, who himself had found long refuge with the Gentile Jethro, and had married his daughter, by whom he had a son, whose name, *Gershom*, denoted his Gentile origin, although his father was none other than the famous Legislator of Israel :—when he, Moses, numbered Israel in the wilderness, was it not found that Ephraim and Manasseh were two of the most numerous tribes who should inherit the promised land? Ephraim in particular afterwards became so powerful, that when a separation of the Tribes took place, it was regarded as the head of the kingdom of Israel. But who was Ephraim? And who was Manasseh? Were they not Joseph's sons by a *Gentile Princess*, and their descendants consequently *as much of Gentile as of Jewish origin*? And did not Ruth the Moabitess give birth to the stock from whence David, and consequently Christ himself proceeded? Ruth iv. 18—22; Matt. i. 5. Thus the covenant of circumcision all along had a benign aspect towards *the world*: and while God *enjoined it* upon the *Jews*, he did not *forbid* its observance by the Gentiles; on the contrary it was most manifestly his will that whosoever of them chose should attend to the letter of the law throughout every period of that economy, and thereby become entirely one with his people Israel. And in the mean time the promises and prophecies that were delivered, so long as that economy continued, all looked

forward to the period when *its peculiarity* should be abolished; and the covenant of God in gospel times be still more fully revealed as established in and with Christ *for all mankind*. Thus it appears that every development of God's covenant relation to his creatures, hath been but a branch of, and a continuation of, *the original universal covenant of redemption*, and so its main feature or characteristic, *universality*, may be traced throughout the whole, notwithstanding certain peculiarities of a limited kind that belonged to some ages of the world. God having elected all mankind in Christ to a salvable state, and to a sufficiency of means and motives, and helps to salvation, was pleased, of his own sovereignty, subsequently to elect one portion of the human family to *special* honour and privileges; and certain individuals of that one family, to separate and special holiness and usefulness, and thus there hath been "an election of grace," Rom. xi. 5, *within the universal election of grace*, John iii. 16, 17, and 1 John ii. 1, 2; but then this election draws no reprobation after it: for neither was there *an original passing by, or a leaving out of the covenant*, one soul of man; nor a *subsequent disfranchisement* of any individual, and much less of large portions of the human family in the mass: for God is of one mind, and who can turn him, and he "willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Here then the foundation of the covenant standeth sure, and all the parts of it are consistent, perfect, and entire; what it was in the beginning, it is now; and *so having never lost its character of universality, all Infants are born under it*, and therefore have a *right* both to its *sign* and its *blessings*; not by nature, for they are in that respect "the children

of wrath," Ephes. ii. 3, but by grace, seeing it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" Rom. ix. 16.

In confirmation of the truths already stated, there is one collateral truth worthy of distinct and special attention. It is this. In the Holy Scriptures, *God is never represented as having made a covenant with an individual without including his posterity also:—he has never entered into a covenant relation with an individual, as an individual, for, and with himself alone, to the exclusion of others in all share of its benefits, and much less to the exclusion of his own household.* So true is this observation, that if any privilege be granted to the head of a family, *though it be of a partial and limited nature, the same grant is secured to his posterity along with him,* and remaineth with them after him, unless it be subsequently forfeited by their own personal transgressions. Thus, for instance, the reward bestowed on Phinehas, for his exemplary fidelity and zeal for the divine glory, was expressed in the following terms:—Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace; and he shall have it, *and his seed after him,* even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel; Numb. xxv. 12, 13. It seems, therefore, that in whatever light we view *covenant transactions*, they have a special bearing *on the family relation, and are not at all made to depend on the age of the members of the family;* so that the conveyance of a right and privilege to a father contains within it the conveyance of the same right and privilege to his son, *so soon as the relation exists;* that is, from his birth, and irrespective of what his future character or conduct may

be. If he persists in sin, God may take the privilege away; but until then it remains as with the father so with the son also; for "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them;" Psalm ciii. 17, 18. Now if these observations be scriptural and just, supposing the doctrine of *general redemption* be rejected, and the doctrine of *Calvinistic election* and *partial redemption* be received in its stead, *even then*, according to those restricted views of redemption, the adoption of the head of a family as God's redeemed servant, implies the covenant relation of God to *his* seed also; so that whatever may be said of other children generally, *his children* most surely have a right in infancy to be admitted into the outward church of Christ. Wherefore, our Baptist Brethren, in refusing to baptize *their own Infants*, when they believe *themselves* to be in a state of grace, do by their own principles and practice curtail the blessings of God's covenant which they believe to be made personally with them as God's elect; and by such refusal they act an unnatural part towards their own offspring, *for they put them out* of that covenant, in which God of his infinite mercy hath already included them. So that when they have narrowed the merciful provisions of redemption to a few people, amongst the number of which they hope to be found, they next narrow the privileges of redemption still more, and by excluding their own offspring, treat them *in spiritual things*, as if they were "*bastards, and not sons.*" Surely this cannot be according to his will who hath said "Behold, all souls are mine: as the soul of the father,

so also the soul of the son is mine," Ezek. xviii. 4, and who "keepeth mercy for thousands" of generations; Exod. xxxiv. 7. If a *limited* covenant, as to Phinehas, *comprehended families, as such*, how much more the covenant of redemption which embraces all mankind? For another illustration, see 2 Chron. vii. 17, 18.

4. Thus we are conducted to that great event, the coming of Jesus Christ into our world, "God manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16, for the salvation of sinners. Now the fact of his incarnation, *includeth within itself the fact of the universality of human redemption*, according to the revelation concerning it which God hath given us in his holy word. For if this were the completion of that original covenant of promise, which had been renewed in various ages, *it must of necessity have the same benign character of universality which that had*; the consistency and uniformity of the divine government, in all its great principles, requiring that the actual ratification of the covenant should not be less comprehensive in its benefits than its antecedent promises.

It seems scarcely possible to avoid admitting the universal redemption of mankind, as a certain consequence resulting from the assumption of human nature by our Lord Jesus Christ; and especially when we associate the fact of his humanity with the scriptural views that have already been exhibited concerning his headship of the human race, as the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven. The nature which he took upon him was *the common nature of man*. It was not the nature of one nation more than of another nation, or of one family more than another family, or of one individual more than another individual; for most assuredly it had no regard

to either caste or colour, or age or clime, *for Christ is every man's brother, and the name Jesus belongs to the universal family of man.* My Saviour is your Saviour, and your Saviour mine, all the world over; unless he be rejected when made known, and his salvation voluntarily neglected, despised, or forsaken: What! Shall we in this age of boasted liberality, abhor from our souls, as repugnant to all ideas of justice and benevolence, the maintenance of caste amongst men in their social intercourse, and profess to rejoice in the power of the Gospel as its great antagonist and abolisher, both in the Eastern and Western portions of our empire, and yet at the same time impute *eternal caste* to Almighty God, and to Jesus Christ, the Author, and end, and glory of that very gospel? Were we to entertain such unworthy notions of God, *our liberalism would reproach our Christianity*; and our zeal for righteous principles in the earth would tacitly imply that there was unrighteousness in heaven. Not so. "God hath made of one blood," saith the Apostle, "all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," Acts xvii. 26, wherefore, when Jesus Christ became a "partaker of *flesh and blood*," Heb. ii. 14, he also was "*made of that one blood*," that all nations of men through him might be saved. Considering therefore the common origin of our nature and of his spotless humanity, it is not more certain that there is a common brotherhood between man and man, than that the same relation for redemption purposes exists between Christ and the whole of the human race.

It was necessary indeed for the tracing of his lineal descent, and for various other holy and benevolent purposes, that he should proceed from one family, and be of "the

seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16; but yet here it is to be specially noted, that neither did he himself, nor any of his inspired Apostles on his behalf, assign to him the *distinctive* appellation of a, or the, Son of Abraham, but *uniformly* that appellation which contains in it *universality*—"the Son of *Man*." This is the more remarkable, if we observe the readiness of our Divine Redeemer to give that honourable appellation occasionally to others, with *which his own designation stands contrasted*. Thus for example to Zaccheus. "And Jesus said *unto him*, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as *he also* is a *son of Abraham*. For *the son of man* is come to seek and to save that which was lost;" Luke xix. 9, 10. Jesus Christ is called the Son of Man about *seventy times* in the New Testament; the appellation being first recorded in Matt. viii. 20, and continued thenceforwards throughout the subsequent periods of his life; and it is now perpetuated in heaven itself, Rev. i. 13, and shall be acknowledged as his just designation in the midst of his glory at the judgment day; Matt. xxv. 31. Now the suitableness of this name, as belonging to his humanity, and to every period of his life and mediatorial reign, *results from the universality of his redemption*; he hath a common name because he is the common Redeemer, so that man, *as man*, and not as a Jew distinguished from a Gentile, or because of any other distinction, but simply as a sinner, hath an interest in his redeeming grace and mercy, and may obtain pardon and eternal life through him.

In further illustration of this appellation of our Lord's humanity, it may be remarked, that it is almost certain the very phrase he employed when speaking of himself

was, "*Son of Adam*," for so "son of man" reads in every Text of the Old Testament where it occurs, two passages only excepted. It is found *ninety-three* times in the Prophet Ezekiel alone, and there it is in every instance, literally "*Son of Adam*;" as also in the following scriptures, Numb. xxiii. 19, Job xxv. 6 and xxxv. 8, Psalm viii. 4, (quoted and applied to Christ by Saint Paul,) Heb. ii. 6, Psalm lxxx. 17 and cxlvi. 3, Isaiah li. 12 and lvi. 2, Jer. xlix. 18, 33, l. 40, and li. 43. The only exceptions are Psalm cxliv. 3, and Dan. vii. 13, where instead of Adam, or Man, Enosh is used, which however is equally extensive, and signifies a human being, one of mankind. Now it was peculiarly appropriate in our blessed Lord, in his great humiliation, to style himself the son of *Adam*;—first, because he thereby traces his pedigree, after the flesh, beyond the Jewish line to the original stock from which all mankind have proceeded; Luke iii. 23—38; secondly, because of his common relation to every family, tribe, nation, kindred and tongue under heaven; Rev. v. 9; and thirdly, because he became, in the place of the first Adam, the Head and representative of mankind, as before shown: and thus the entire analogy of faith, the concurrent agreement of the doctrines of the gospel, and every collateral idea as gathered from particular phrases and expressions, do all conduct us to *this same glorious truth, the universal redemption of mankind by Christ Jesus our Lord*. Therefore his birth was ushered in, not with a national, but with an universal song; and in the hearing of Jewish Shepherds *the world's Anthem* was sung by Angels, saying,—“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward *men*;" Luke ii. 14; for there

was brought that day “good tidings of great joy, which should be to *all people* ;” Luke ii. 10. “*Good-will*” then to *Infants* through the babe in Bethlehem born, as to every man through the son of man, and let all the Church say, Amen ; and let all her ministers bring them to Jesus, and dedicate them to him by a solemn baptismal service in the sanctuary of the Lord. For the terms and tenor of the Covenant of Redemption do plainly shew that they have been redeemed by his precious blood.

SECTION II.

Infants are Redeemed, as is evident from the express declarations of God's holy word concerning the extent of human redemption.

It may, perhaps, appear to some persons at first view almost superfluous to lay so much stress on the doctrinal fact of General Redemption, in a treatise on Infant Baptism ; but a closer consideration of each subject will convince us of the inseparable relation subsisting between them, and will serve to show us that the right of an Infant to Baptism, *does not spring from the circumstance of his being born of Christian Parents*, as too many have supposed, because it seldom happens that any but the children of Christians actually are thus dedicated to God. The original ground of the sacred right to Baptism lying in Redemption, every poor Hindoo, or African, or Indian Infant, *is as much entitled to that privilege as Infants born in Christendom* : and were a Missionary in his travels to find such Infant forsaken of its Parents, and to be inclined from the compassion that glowed in his heart to take it to his house and home, it would be as

much his duty to baptize that child as he would one of his own offspring, if he intended it to remain a part of his own household. The reason why heathen Infants are not generally baptized, *is not because they have no right to it, as the Lord's redeemed ones; but because parental authority interposes, in connexion with national heathen and idolatrous customs and worship*, which circumstances render it unfitting that a child, under such a certain future training in sin should be formally introduced into the Church of Christ. But when the Parents turn to the Lord Christ, or even one of them only, then the original right of the Children becomes *recognizable in that public religious ordinance*, and the children, along with the Parent or Parents, become "clean;" 1 Cor. vii. 14. Nor is it any trifling matter for them to be made so far clean or holy, as to be saved from all the outward pollutions and abominations of heathenism, of which few persons have an adequate idea who do not know heathenism in the detail. Indeed a pious Calvinist Baptist, well known to the Author, who was intimate with him, as a man of great Christian worth and excellence, once had the candour to acknowledge when pressed with the argument, that *if he believed* the doctrine of general Redemption, he should be forced to yield up his opinions about Baptism, and own that Infant Baptism was lawful and right in the Christian Church. This topic therefore will be further discussed, yet with brevity, in the remaining sections of this chapter. And the two leading truths elucidated in the present section are these:—First, The Universal Redemption of mankind by Christ is no where *denied* in the Holy Scriptures;—and secondly, In many places that doctrine is expressly *affirmed*.

The negative view of the subject first claims attention. The general redemption of mankind is not denied in God's holy word. It is no where either said or intimated that Jesus Christ *did not* die for all men; or that he did die *only* for a few, or a *portion* of the human race, whether many or few. Indeed the word *few* is never once used in the inspired volume in connection with redemption: the *only terms* employed are "*many*," and "*all*," where *many* hath the same signification as *all*, mankind at large being intended, even "the multitudes" of Adam's posterity, as may be seen in Rom. v. 12—19. The notion of *partial redemption is radically Jewish*. Not that the sentiment was found in the law of Moses, but it took its rise from the proud carnal hearts of the Jews, who interpreted God's *special* favour to Israel, which Moses and David celebrated so justly in strains of devoutest gratitude, as God's *exclusive* favour for Israel, as though because he were the God of their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, *he were the God of none beside*. And thus God's goodness to them, *over and above* his goodness to mankind, they perverted to support them in the vain fancy of their being the peculiar favorites of heaven, irrespective of their conduct, merely because they were Jews. So, misunderstanding the true and ancient scriptural doctrine of election—an *election to special privileges*—they concocted an election scheme of their own, whose characteristic was, *not superabundance of mercy towards some for the sake of all;—but the limitation of mercy to some to the exclusion of all besides*. And never were the Jews more confident of this election than at the very time God was about to place them under a sentence of reprobation for more than eighteen hundred years, under

which sentence they lie to this day ;—a large view of which is given in Rom. ix., x., xi. Now *this figment* the Apostle *sweeps away in one single inquiry* :—“ Is he the God of the Jews only ? Is he not also of the Gentiles ? Yes of the Gentiles also ; seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith ;” Rom. iii. 29, 30. And yet, strange as it may seem, this carnal Jewish notion has found its resting place in the Christian Church, in the doctrine of *limited redemption*, and *consequent election* of a favored few to inherit eternal life. Thus the old exclusivism of the Jews pretends to spring forth anew from the cross of the Saviour : howbeit Paul knew nothing of it ; for he might well “ glory in the cross,” as for other reasons, so also for this, that “ unto him was the grace given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, *to cause all men to see* what is the fellowship of the mystery of making the Gentiles to be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel ;” Ephes. iii. 4—11. And with this great purpose agrees the prophecy of Christ, “ And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men* unto me ;” John xii. 32. But if we search the Scriptures throughout from one end to the other, for a clear declaration to the effect that any nation, or any individuals, *are not* redeemed by Christ, the search will be made in vain. Every thing advanced in support of such a doctrine is mere inference drawn from a certain preconceived scheme of election, with which redemption must, by a bungling kind of argumentation, be made to harmonize ; and the whole is intended to account, in a short way, for the present actual condition of a majority of man-

kind, who are yet in their sins, and exposed to the danger of eternal perdition. But *as to divine testimony*, it hath not a single Text to rest upon, and therefore seeks by a curious process of reasoning to convert all into a part, in those texts which are clean contrary to it.

For when we come to inquire into the express testimony of God's holy word on this point, we find that it is in perfect accordance with the whole body of revealed truth from one end of the Bible to the other. For has it not been already shown that the original promise was a Covenant of Redemption, made with Christ on behalf of all mankind? And that every successive renewal of that Covenant bore testimony to the same universal purpose and promise of divine grace? To all which let the remark now be added, that *the whole law itself is one consolidated testimony to the same glorious fact?* For what is the law as to its moral precepts and sanctions? Is it not an eternal law? This will scarcely be doubted by any Christian, seeing every part of the moral law is incorporated with the Gospel of Christ, and has as much authority in enjoining obedience upon us as it had upon Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. Here then we meet and concur in opinion, (a few extravagant speculatists excepted,) that *the law is universal in its claims, and allows of no exemption from its authority.* Such a belief has the approval of divine inspiration in the following words of Saint Paul:—"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, *and all the world may become guilty before God;*" Rom. iii. 19. But now let it be faithfully borne in mind, *that the law was not given "without shedding of blood,"* for other-

wise God would have been a consuming fire to Israel. For Moses caused sacrifices to be offered up, and “took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the *book of the covenant*, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold *the blood of the covenant* which the Lord hath made with you *concerning all these words* ;” Exod. xxiv. 6—8. Now *the redemption was as universal as the law*. This is so clear in regard to those to whom the law was first given that Saint Paul pointedly mentions the fact, when he is referring to this important transaction. “Wherefore,” saith he, “neither the first testament,” or covenant, “was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken *every precept to all the people* according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled both the book, and all the people*, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you ;” Heb. ix. 18—20. Observe, *the sprinkling of the blood* was as universal as the precept of the law. Wherefore, if the law then promulgated to Israel was intended to reach to all mankind, the sacrifices offered under that law typified redemption for all mankind also, to be accomplished in due time by the Son of God; otherwise there would have been an incongruity and contradiction between the several parts of that ancient and holy economy, *a universal law associated with a partial redemption*, which can in no wise be admitted as consistent with the harmony and perfection of the works of God, or as consistent with the testimony of Saint

Paul in the Scripture now cited from the Epistle to the Hebrews.

What need have we then of any further witness from Moses to the doctrine of the general redemption of mankind? For every commandment of the law points out to every man the necessity thereof, seeing the "law was our schoolmaster *to bring us to Christ*;" Gal. iii. 24; and every sacrifice under the law shadowed forth the sacrifice of that Christ to whom the severity of the law was to drive us, that is to say, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" John i. 29. Wherefore though *none but Israelites* looked on the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, that was a sign of the lifting up of the Son of Man on the cross, "that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life;" John iii. 13, 14. An universal remedy for Israel was figurative of the universal redemption of mankind. According, therefore, to the New Testament interpretation of both the moral and sacrificial law of Moses, that law has not merely *detached proofs* of the general redemption of Christ, but is *one uniform proof thereof from beginning to end*, so that even when exhibiting the illustrious doctrine of Israel's election, to be unto God "a holy nation," and "a peculiar treasure above all people," Exod. xix. 5, 6, there runs parallel with it, full evidence that *that election was a part of an universal scheme* to provide a Saviour who should be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

As to the Prophets, they all bear testimony to the same divine truth. As a specimen we only refer to two or three passages. In the second Psalm the Father makes a universal promise to the Son, and the Son of God issues

a universal command to mankind; both are founded on Universal Redemption, which made his claim just, and his authority binding. No less comprehensive is the seventy-second Psalm: the whole earth is redeemed by Christ, and therefore “let the whole earth be filled with his glory.” With what plainness does Isaiah speak of this subject in his beautiful *prophetic narrative*, if the phrase may be allowed. “*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;*” Isaiah liii. 6. Here glance again at Gen. iii. 15, as interpreted by Paul, Rom. v. 12—19, and then look through the fifty-third of Isaiah, that out of the writings of these three witnesses, Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, this divine doctrine according to godliness may be established.

A few additional Texts only from the New Testament writers shall be added on this subject, so deeply important to offending and guilty man. Amongst the choicest portions of Holy Writ we have these divine sayings. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;” John iii. 16. “And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; *and not for ours only*, but also for *the sins of the whole world;*” 1 John ii. 1, 2. These two Scriptures, read and examined together, mutually illustrate each other. *Saint John fixes his own sense of the term “world,”* and shews that he doth not mean an elect world, or the world of believers, *because he expressly distinguishes the world from such believers;* of them he speaks first, and then adds, “and not for *ours* only, but *also* for the sins of the

whole world!" Not satisfied with the mere term world, as contradistinguished from believers, he throws in an additional word,—“the *whole world*,—the entire world without the exception of one soul,—man, woman, or infant of days. Could any language positively affirm general redemption more strongly than it is here affirmed? So likewise when he saith in his gospel, or rather records the words of Christ,—“For God so loved the world,” he means not the world of believers, but *the world of unbelievers*, as is plain from the fact that God did not give his Son *because* they believed, *but in order that they might believe*; and because *the world of sinners was guilty*, God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world,” for that guilt, “but that the world through him might be saved,” from their justly merited condemnation; John iii. 17. Thus God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, 2 Cor. v. 19, when Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time;” 1 Tim. ii. 6. And on this doctrine is founded the universal command “Goye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned;” Mark xvi. 15, 16. Thus Christ is seen to be that Prophet like unto Moses whom the Lord our God should raise up amongst his brethren, whose laws, like those of the Jewish Legislator, being invested with the character of universality, unto him should all men hearken; but whosoever would not hearken unto him should be cut off from his people, and for ever excluded from the salvation of God.

SECTION III.

Infants are Redeemed, as is evident from certain consequences flowing from Redemption, in which they and all mankind are interested.

The consequences flowing from Redemption in which all mankind are interested may be summed up under the several heads of *existence, providence, law, conscience, and a future resurrection* of the dead, in order to our appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive the final sentence of life or death at his hands. Now, if these results, which really do affect all mankind, can be fairly traced to redemption, and are as much the fruits of it, as the special blessings of pardon and eternal life, which are only granted in riper years to true and obedient believers, who are in a peculiar spiritual sense God's elect, then it is impossible not to concede that the doctrine we have sought to maintain concerning the general redemption of mankind is *a fact* no longer to be doubted or denied.

Existence itself then is the fruit of redemption: we are born, we live, because we are redeemed; each fact is alike certain, for they stand in the relation of cause and effect the one to the other. The few remarks to be made on this head may be very properly joined to the preceding observations concerning *the time* when the redemption covenant was originally made with man; see page 17. These two portions of the Treatise will mutually illustrate and confirm the common truth to which they both lead as their centre. So clearly was the existence of mankind understood by our first Parents to flow from redemption, that in acknowledgment thereof, when man had received

the promise of a Deliverer, he called his wife's name no longer *Woman*, as at the first, because of her relation to man, see Gen. ii. 23, but *Eve*, which signifies *Life*, because of her relation to posterity. In which very ancient fact we seem to have *the origin* of the custom of giving "a new name," Rev. ii. 17, which afterwards obtained in token of any special blessing or benefit conferred, see Gen. xvii. 5 and xxxii. 28. And this new designation of the woman, by so significant a name, is the more expressive, following as it does in the sacred records the announcement to man of his *mortality*. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground : for out of it was thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. And Adam called his wife's name, *Eve*, or *Life* ; because she was the mother of all living ;" Gen. iii. 19, 20. And she was properly called *Life*, since through her seed "*justification unto life, came upon all men ;*" Rom. v. 18. For life being forfeited by the first pair, they were not entitled to *one moment's* prolongation of their natural existence, apart from the redeeming mercy of their God ; and of course they could not be entitled to the right or privilege of becoming the *propagators of life*, in a natural sense, by producing posterity to multiply in the earth. The original blessing was couched in these words :—" Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth ;" Gen. i. 28 ; but that entailed blessing, with every other favor, was forfeited by transgression, so that God could not allow them to " be fruitful," nor even to continue in being, and at the same time uphold the truth and dignity of his law, which had declared, "*In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,*" Gen. ii. 17, *unless redemption had inter-*

vened, in order that a *reprieve* might be granted, a *probationary condition* of a new kind established, and a day of grace and salvation vouchsafed to sinful and guilty man. Wherefore existence itself became, *from that day forwards, to every one of woman born, the fruit of redemption*; an appointed effect resulting in the course of ordinary generation from a gracious cause.

With good reason therefore hath the Prophet Isaiah connected *our birth with the birth of Christ*. For when he had announced him as coming into our world, saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," amongst other lofty titles, he styles him "*The everlasting Father*," he being the unchangeable source of existence to all the fallen children of men; Isaiah xix. 6. Or, as some prefer to read the clause, "The Father of Eternity," which is substantially the same, and equally true. For in his holy person and divine work of human redemption, he most literally answers to this glorious designation. For if he had not been "a child born," neither should we have been born; if he had not been announced as the seed of the woman, *and so stayed the sentence of death*, the law would have been executed, and the first sinners would have perished, and in them their unborn posterity, and so eternity, which is the chief glory of man's existence, would have never been known by us: but redemption, by giving to us a being, secured to us, notwithstanding our liability to temporal death, *an eternity of being*, and thus the Redeemer became "the Father of Eternity" to all mankind. And in this relation he stands to every Infant brought forth into our world of sin, and sorrow, and death; for though it should live but a day, an hour, yea, only a moment, yet *having existed through Christ, a whole*

immortality of blessedness is secure unto it by Christ, and he proves himself to such a babe of a few fleeting seconds here, the Father of an eternity of glory and joy in his own kingdom, where sin, and pain, and death, can never be known.

As confirmatory of this consolatory truth, we may compare a few other Scriptures, bearing directly upon it. "But thou art he," saith the Psalmist, "that took me out of the womb : thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb ; thou art my God from my mothers's belly ;" Psalm xxii. 9, 10. And again, "By thee have I been holden up from the womb : thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels : my praise shall be continually of thee ;" Psalm lxxi. 6. And again :—"For thou hast possessed my reins ; thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee ; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made : marvellous are thy works ; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect ; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ;" Psalm cxxxix. 13—17. Yet it must be remembered that this same Psalmist, notwithstanding his devout adoration of the divine goodness towards him even before his actual birth, in another place deeply expressed his penitence because of his original sinfulness :—"Behold," saith he, "I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me ;" Psalm li. 5. Where-

fore these and similar Scriptures can only be reconciled by the twofold doctrines which lay at the foundation of all true godliness ; namely, the fall of man in Adam, and the redemption of man by Christ, so that God hath *a gracious* regard even to the unformed substance of the human frame, though conceived in sin, because of the redemption thereof by him, who, without sin, was born of a woman to pardon and save mankind. Nor must the expression of such sentiments be restricted to the holy Psalmist ; for, on the grounds before stated, God is called by Moses “ *the God of the spirits of all flesh ;*” Numb. xvi. 22. And the Apostle Paul taught a similar doctrine, even to the ignorant heathen, when he sanctioned and applied to them the quotation of one of their own Poets, as containing a portion of divine truth, “—For we *are also his offspring ;*” Acts xvii. 28. Existence, then, is the first, and most immediate consequence, of redemption, by which we are brought into a capability of receiving and obtaining those blessings which as sinners we need to make us holy and happy on earth, and exalt us after this life to the everlasting joys of heaven.

Providential goodness next opens to our view. As soon as we are born we are cast upon the care of God, according to the declaration of the Psalmist already cited,—“By thee have I been holden up from the womb ; Psalm lxxi. 6. Nor is this care restricted to one period of human life only, but it extends to every moment of our earthly being, as it is written, “In him we live, and move, and have our being ;” Acts xvii. 28. Nor is it confined to one class of individuals merely ; for though the righteous are the objects of God’s *peculiar care*, so that “he giveth his angels charge over them, to keep

them in all their ways," Psalm xci. 11, yet the rest of mankind share also with them ten thousand blessings of his Providence; "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" Matt. v. 45. But temporal blessings of every kind, no less than the rich, spiritual, and saving blessings of the gospel, are the fruit of redemption, which is evident, as from other Scriptures, so in particular from these words in the Lord's prayer,—“Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;” Matt. vi. 11, 12. Here we are taught to pray unto our universal Father in Heaven both for our daily sustenance and for pardon. But then the throne to which we come *for both blessings* is the same “*throne of grace*,” and the communication thereof in each instance is an act of grace: for God only heareth and answereth prayer in and through Christ, and consequently both blessings in and through Christ's redemption are granted to the sons of men. All this was in a manner made visible to the outward senses of men when our Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, for he both healed diseases and forgave iniquities, thus doing good both to the bodies and souls of men. Nor did he withhold the former blessing, even from the unthankful who applied to him, as in the case of the lepers, ten of whom were cleansed, but one only, and he a Samaritan, returned back, and gave God thanks for his mercy; Luke xvii. 12—18. So in the wilderness, the same hands fed the multitudes with bread that were afterwards stretched out on the cross to procure pardon and salvation for a guilty world; *Christ thus shewing in his own life and acts that good of every kind came from a Redeemer*, and for the sake of

the Redeemer alone, to the fallen children of men. And his prophecies concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem were so expressed as to imply that those great events would be brought to pass by his supreme direction, and would be the execution of a part of that judicial power given to him as the Son of Man; Matt. xxiv. 29—35.

What then is the whole scheme of God's providential care and rule of mankind, ordering and directing all things according to his own sovereign will and pleasure? Is it a scheme altogether distinct from redemption, and having no relation to the cross, and to him that was crucified? Or, is it God carrying out and applying the high and eternal principles and purposes of redemption in the government of mankind? If so, *then if Providence be universal, Redemption is universal*; as "God was in Christ reconciling the world," so God is in Christ governing the world according to his plan of reconciliation, as it is written,—“and the government shall be upon his shoulder;” Isaiah ix. 6. “All power,” said Jesus, “is given unto me in heaven and in earth;” Matt. xxviii. 18. Even the opposition of the wicked to the throne of God makes this clear, for it is interpreted as opposition to the government of the Son of God; Psalm ii. So then, Jesus is “over all, God blessed for ever;” Rom. ix. 5; and whether he “make the sun to rule by day,” or “the moon and stars to rule by night;” whether “he smite Egypt in their first-born,” or “bring out Israel with a strong hand, and with a stretched-out arm;” whether he “deliver his people from their enemies,” or “giveth food to all flesh,”—each separate act of Providence, and all unitedly, result from the same great work of his redeeming “mercy, which endureth for ever;” Psalm cxxxvi.

It is God in Christ who pardoneth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel; it is God in Christ also who "appointeth to men the bounds of their habitations," Acts xvii. 26, and who giveth "fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness," Acts xiv. 17, so that all our blessings are not only divine, but the fruit of a divine Saviour's love; and in the same light we shall interpret, as well our afflictions and crosses, as our comforts and enjoyments, if we have faith in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Thus "the Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all;" Psalm ciii. 19. Yea, man's mortality interrupteth not his sway, for he is "Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9, and "hath the keys of hell and of death;" Rev. xi. 18; and in the course of his government, he calls away Adults or Infants, at such age, and by such instrumentality, as it seemeth good to him, either directly to appoint or to permit to be employed, for their removal from the land of the living. "*Thou* turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return ye children of men;" Psalm xc. 2. Providence then in all its parts and bearings being inseparable from Redemption, if the former be general, so is the latter; both equally extending to all the nations, families, and individuals of mankind.

As further consequences flowing from general redemption, may be mentioned the universal existence of *law*, and *conscience*, and the general bestowment of the *Holy Spirit*, which God giveth *sufficiently* for saving purposes to all men, though not to all men *equally*, nor *equally* in all ages of the world. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men," Titus ii. 11, both

under the Jewish and Christian Dispensations ; and it always taught in substance the same lessons to the world, the necessity of forsaking sin, and turning to God, and looking for a Saviour ; Titus ii. 12, 13. As to the Jews, God's wonders towards them in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Canaan, in Babylon, and in Canaan again, *were wrought in the sight of the whole earth*, so that the light of revelation with which they were especially favoured, was continually casting its reflected light into the darkness of the heathen nations. Their history was wrought up with the history of all the great monarchies of the world ; nor, from the calling of Abraham to Christ, was there a single generation of mankind that was not more or less enlightened, and benefited, and taught salvation, by God's word and works as made known to the Jewish Nation. As to the Christian Dispensation, we have the express words of Christ for our guidance :—" And this gospel of the kingdom shall be *preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations* ; and then shall the end come," Matt. xxiv. 14, meaning the end of the Jewish polity. How literally this prophecy was fulfilled, see the Acts of the Apostles, and the testimony of Saint Paul, who thus speaketh in reference to the word of God amongst the Gentiles ;—" But I say, Have they not heard ? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world ;" Rom. x. 18. Thus " the grace of God which bringeth salvation *appeared* anew unto all men" after Christ came ; and an attentive examination of this fact will help to explain the apparent mystery of such multitudes of nations sitting in heathen darkness to the present day. God has judicially punished them for their unfaithfulness to that knowledge of his

gospel with which they were favored, on the same principle that hath led him to punish Israel with eighteen hundred years rejection for their sin and unbelief. Yet now, as heretofore, he hath so ordered his government, that Christendom, as Judea, hath ever and anon shot fresh rays of light into the darkness of heathenism, which light has abundantly increased in our own time and age. And even at the worst of times, when "darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people," Isaiah lx. 2, we may still trace the universal existence of laws and conscience, and the bestowment of some measure of the Holy Spirit; for otherwise, mankind in the midst of their superstitions, would have been incapable of "seeking the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him;" Acts xvii. 27.

As to Law;—there is no nation, family, or individual, "without law to God;" 1 Cor. ix. 21. It cannot be; for the relation of Creator and creature, which is the basis of all other relations, doth of necessity imply *law*. God could not create *an independent creature*; nor could a creature cause himself to be independent, for then he would cease to be a creature and would become a God. Wherefore dependence being a necessary consequence of the relation, and inseparable from it, obedience to the law of the Creator, as a practical acknowledgment of that dependence, becomes a *universal* duty. But seeing God is an absolutely perfect Being,—perfect in all his attributes and government, it follows as absolutely certain, that, whatever kind of law he might choose to give to any of his creatures, whether the inferior law of nature, or the higher law of revelation, it would be, from the very moment the relation existed, *a law suited to their actual condition*.

Now no law is suited to fallen man but a *mediatorial law*; wherefore, *God in Christ*, since the Fall, *hath been the Fountain of law to the whole world*. This is clear enough as to the moral law, for Saint Paul affirms that “it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,” Gal. iii. 19, for which reason the terrible thunders and lightnings of Sinai were not permitted to slay so much as one of the guilty multitudes who stood trembling with dismay at the foot of the mountain. As to the law of nature, so called, that is also associated with the equitable principles of the gospel, and will form a part of the rule of procedure in the last day, Rom. ii. 11—16; and God himself “hath showed,” or revealed it, unto the heathen; Rom. i. 19. Indeed it must be so. For if Law be a “*good*, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,” James i. 17, then, he cannot vary most essentially and completely the principles of his government, by sometimes bestowing a good without Christ, and at other times with him; but, as an absolutely unchangeable being, he must bestow *all good* in him and through him, *at all times*, that “in *all things* he may have the pre-eminence,” and *universal* glory and dominion be ascribed unto him for ever,

As Law, so Conscience, is common to all mankind. It is no more needful to define what conscience is than to define what light is; it is easier understood than described. Every man knows that he has a conscience; it is a part of his nature, so that it is impossible, how much soever he may desire it, utterly to efface the conviction thereof from his mind. And his conscience, as a judge, applies to him personally that law of God under which he

lives. The judicial proceedings of all governments, even of heathen nations, are founded on it, as Saint Paul's words imply, when they "implead or defend one another;" Rom. ii. 15. And our own admirable method of trial by jury most fully establishes it, when, the law of the case having been made known, as well as the facts, every jurymen is expected to bring in an honest and just verdict, according to the dictates of his conscience, to which alone he is amenable under God for that verdict whatever it may be. And the general approbation of the decision of our impartial juries, as guided by our most venerable and upright judges, than whom no nation was ever favored with abler or more honest guardians of their liberties, shews the existence of conscience in the individuals composing the masses of society, and renders it impossible for us to avoid the conviction that conscience is a universal principle in man.

Now the universal existence of Law and Conscience implies the universal bestowment of the Holy Spirit also. For though every man be under law to God as his Creator, and though conscience be a part of the moral constitution of the nature of man, so that he would not be man without it, still it is to be specially observed that the law under which he is now placed, and which conscience in its actings recognizes, is both a *divine* and a *gracious* work, and is *derived from the Holy Spirit*, whose light and influences are given, in various degrees, to enlighten, warn, and admonish, the children of men. For the moral government under which God hath placed the world being a *Mediatorial Government*, and the law, whether of nature amongst the heathen, or of written revelation amongst the Jews and Christians, being the

result of that divine appointment, it must, in each case, and in every instance, be traced to one and the same divine source, agreeably to the expression of Saint Paul, who declares concerning the heathen, that they “shew the work of the law *written* in their hearts;” the Apostle herein alluding to that well-known fact concerning the law of Moses, its having been written by the finger of God. So that that portion of “the truth,” which the heathen “held in unrighteousness,” came as surely from God as the Scriptures, the word of truth: for so the same Apostle testifies, “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; *for God hath shewed it unto them;*” Rom. i. 18, 19. Now God revealeth truth by his Holy Spirit; wherefore his Holy Spirit was, and still is given unto them. And although they have not such accurate views of good and evil as we have, *some* distinction between good and evil they perceive; for even the revenge of a New Zealander, mixed up as it is with the most cruel and ferocious passions, proceeds on the assumption that a *wrong* has been done him, which *ought not* to have been done; and that such wrong having been inflicted, it may and ought to be *avenged* and *punished*. And because of the power of conscience, and the sense of guilt, death is an object of universal dread; for the world feels itself guilty before God. *Wherefore the world is every where ripe for the gospel*, even as the world every where needeth it, so that Missionaries to the heathen cannot do better than in their very first discourse to preach Jesus and the resurrection, even as Paul did at Athens, and make Christ crucified their chief theme unto the ends of the earth. “The sting of death,” saith the Apostle, “*is sin*; and the strength of sin” in its con-

demning power "*is the law*," 1 Cor. xv. 56, wherefore that dread of death common to mankind proceedeth from an undefinable consciousness of guilt, and an apprehension of the darkness of the grave, beyond which no light can be seen. Yet herein we may observe the exact wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, in that though Infants, on account of the original sinfulness of their nature, are subject to death, they not having committed actual sin, *knew nothing of the dread of dying*, and thus, through Jesus the Redeemer, "the sting of death" is evidently taken away from them, as though in the midst of their mortal conflicts the Gospel mildly proclaimed to those who behold their unconscious struggles with the last enemy—"There is no condemnation to them," for "they are in Christ Jesus;" Rom. viii. 1. The fear of death begins in mankind at the age when children begin to discern between good and evil; but as to Infants they never *know* what death is till they find themselves in his presence who is "the Resurrection and the life," to live for evermore. But the personal transgressors of the law whether of nature or revelation, are universally considered as "guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19, which guilt could not be justly imputed to them, if, at the same time, they are "without strength," as well as "ungodly," Rom. v. 6, all supernatural help was denied them, and their hearts were left from first to last unvisited by the Holy Spirit of God.

Indeed the notion that some men are left entirely without gracious visitations from the Spirit of God involves this contradiction, *that the several Persons of the Holy and blessed Trinity are not agreed in their divine counsels and work*. For whereas it is undeniable that all

men are related to the Father, who is the source of creation ; and to the Son of God, by virtue of his having taken upon him the nature of man ; *to the Holy Spirit they bear no relation at all*, if that notion be true ; for then he hath no more to do with or for them than if they had no being. Now such an opinion goes directly to the subverting of that grand fundamental Scriptural verity, *the Unity of the Godhead* ; for that doctrine assures us that in essence, counsel, and work, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are one for evermore. Moreover, such a notion destroys the harmony and perfection of *the Holy Spirit's own work* as connected with human redemption. For whereas he, by his overshadowing power, created of the substance of the woman the human nature of our Lord, whose birth was announced as containing "good tidings of great joy to all people," Luke ii. 10, and also after our Lord's crucifixion and death, quickened his mortal body, for he was "raised by the Spirit of Holiness from the dead," Rom. i. 4, and viii. 11, who also raised him up to be an universal Judge, "the Lord both of the dead and living;" Rom. xiv. 9; his personal agency in the work of man's redemption and salvation would be *contradictory*:—for, *in its external aspect*, so far as it relates to the person and official acts of the Redeemer, *it would have the character of universality* ; but, *in actual benefits bestowed*, notwithstanding the declaration at his birth, *it would be partial and limited*. Wherefore we cannot but conclude, that, though that *abundant* gift of the Holy Spirit, called in the Scripture "the *pouring out*" of the Spirit, is only granted in connection with the preaching of the gospel of Christ, still the gift of that same Spirit has never been

entirely withheld from any age, or nation, or individual whatsoever, from the foundation of the world to the present day. See Psalm lxviii. 18, and Gen. vi. 3, Psalm xcv. 7—11, Isaiah lxiii. 10, Heb. iii., iv., Acts vii. 51, Rom i. 18—32, John i. 9, and John iii. 19.

In concluding our review of the consequences flowing from the Redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, besides Existence, Providence, Law, Conscience, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, we may add the universal resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment of all mankind at the last day. On this portion of our connected argument we need not enlarge; for on the fact of the general resurrection of the dead, all Christians are agreed. The words of holy scripture on this head are very explicit. “Marvel not at this,” saith Christ, “for the hour is coming, in the which *all that are in the graves* shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation;” John v. 28, 29. So Daniel, “And *many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt;” Dan. xii. 2. And the use of the word “*many*” in this Text, as in Rom. v. 19, shews that in reference to mankind it is equivalent to the word “all,” and that it doth not denote a portion, or a large part of the human race, but all without exception, considered collectively as the many, or the multitudes, because of the vastness of the number of the family of man, when all generations are brought together in the mass, as composing what Saint John calls “the whole world;” 1 John ii. 2. Saint Paul also writes thus:—“We *must all appear* before

the judgment seat of Christ ; that *every one* may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad ;" 2 Cor. v. 10. 'There shall then be "a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust ;" Acts. xxiv. 15.

But while this doctrine is generally admitted, it hath not been by all Christians observed with sufficient distinctness, how certainly the resurrection, not of the righteous only, but of all mankind, *is a consequence of redemption, from which fact alone the universal redemption of mankind is demonstrated beyond all contradiction.* The Old and New Testament alike concur in support of this truth. What said Paul to the Athenians ? "And the times of this ignorance God winked at ; but now commandeth all men every where to repent ;" because he hath appointed a day, in the which *he will judge the world* in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he *hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead ;*" Acts xvii. 30, 31. Thus saith the Messiah in the Prophet, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plagues ; O grave, I will be thy destruction ;" Hosea xiii. 14. Now these words are quoted or referred to by Saint Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 55, throughout which chapter he speaks of the resurrection as being general, in consequence of Christ's resurrection, and dwells on the contrast between the first and second Adam, as in his Epistle to the Romans. Wherefore if any man were *unredeemed, his body would not be raised ;* but as *all* will be raised, therefore redemption by Christ Jesus hath extended unto all mankind.

Nor is it less certain that all will be judged; the office of judge, and the administration of judgment being founded on redemption also. "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself: and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because he is the Son of Man*;" John v. 26, 27. Wherefore having been lifted up on the cross, as the Son of Man, for the world's redemption, he hath been appointed to judge the world he hath redeemed; Acts xvii. 31. And thus as in the beginning, when there was but one pair, his sentence as Judge, though not at that time a final one, was associated with his covenant engagement to become the Redeemer; so his final sentence on all their posterity in the last day, will be the concluding act of that covenant engagement, and resulting from it:" and then shall the wicked go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal;" Matt. xxv. 46.

SECTION IV.

The divine Truths established in the foregoing Sections specially applied to the case of Infants.

We have now arrived at the conclusion of our extended remarks concerning the universality of man's redemption by the Son of man Jesus Christ our Lord. We have gone into this subject at length, for the more effectually securing the position we endeavour to establish with regard to man's infant race. For if God chose, as a mere sovereign, to leave any portion of the human family without redemption, why might he not leave some infants

without redemption also? What security have we that he hath not done so? But if Jesus Christ did indeed “by *the grace* of God taste death for every man,” Heb. ii. 9, then, so sure as he tasted the death, God had a favor towards, and is actually gracious to, every man coming into the world. And although, according to his sovereign wisdom and foreknowledge, he in ancient times made his choice, and preferred one rather than another, even before the children were born, or had done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated;” Rom. ix. 11—13; yet that loving and hating, *related not to Eternity, but to time*:—the loved being chosen to special privileges and blessings, and the hated having inferior and secondary blessings:—but still both the loved and the hated *had their blessings*, and, *in each case*, the blessings all proceeded from the same source, Redemption, in which great work of Christ they were equally interested. For when God said to Abraham, “And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” he meant what he said, and never intended that Abraham’s own grandson Esau should be shut out of redemption, as a poor excluded reprobate, in the very next generation. Whatever of *special* privilege he lost, he forfeited by his own careless indifference; and had not his father Isaac so much as himself to blame for it. But our good Baptist Brethren *make Esaus of all their children*; they know nothing of the wholesome doctrine of election, *even after their children are born*, much less before their birth; but while infants, they *treat them all in the lump as if they were uncovenanted reprobates*, and leave it for

time and chance to discover who amongst them may be gathered up as the elect children of God. We think it better to regard all our children as God's elect, and to pray on the day of their baptism, "that they may ever remain in that number, and to believe assuredly that it will be so, unless they afterwards "sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage," or, in other words, *renounce* Christ for the world, after they have been dedicated to his service.

The redemption of Christ being a Covenant-act, Infants who are redeemed by him are sacredly related to him as their Covenant Head. *Baptism does not put them into that relation*, but is only a *visible and outward recognition of it*; wherefore to refuse them Baptism *is to refuse to recognise God's own act*; and, *as though God had really done nothing for them* already in the way of spiritual benefit, to wait and see *if* he have any favor towards them, and *if* he will be gracious unto them in future years. But we maintain that *they are the Lord's*, even as we are the Lord's, at least so far as redemption is concerned; and that with them, as with us, the "everlasting covenant is ordered in all things and sure;" 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, Psalm lxxxix. 28, 29, &c. So long as they are in a state of unsinning infancy, Christ is their Saviour; every promise which is Yea and Amen in Christ is their promise," though they be incapable of personal faith, *because they are not guilty of actual unbelief*; and the heaven where Christ is, is the heaven where they, dying in infancy, most assuredly go. Whither should the lambs of the flock be gathered, but in the divine Shepherd's heavenly fold? Every benefit flowing to them from redemption is necessarily and un-

avoidably *an eternal benefit*; for nothing cuts a redeemed creature off from the everlasting mercy of God in Christ Jesus, but wilful, personal, and actual transgressions. Let us trace in order as before described the saving benefits of redeeming love towards their immortal souls.

They owe their being to the redeeming love of Christ, and through it they are also from the earliest moment of existence the creatures of his providential care. And though, dying in infancy, they never understood the law of that gracious economy under which they are born, be it of nature, as in heathen countries, or of revelation, as in Christendom; nor the power of conscience in accusing or excusing according to their personal deeds; nor the operations of the Holy Spirit, so as to *understand* what they are;—yet they are not incapable, whether with or without the ordinance of baptism, of experiencing the *regenerating* and *sanctifying* influences of the Holy Spirit, which are requisite for salvation, even where actual sin hath not been committed, to make pardon needed. Dying in infancy, through the merits of the Redeemer, they are “born again of the Spirit,” and so made meet for the kingdom of heaven; John iii. 7. Nor is this impossible, though the mode may to us be inconceivable. For as an infant is sinful by nature before it hath any consciousness of sin; so it may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, before it hath any consciousness of holiness. Indeed no one can say at how early a period of the soul’s existence divine influence may be communicated from the Spirit of the living God. “As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child;

even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all;" Eccles. xi. 5. It is certain that John, the forerunner of our Lord, was "*filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb*:" Luke i. 15. Thus he was *spiritually baptized, not merely in infancy, but before his birth*; so abundantly was the Holy Ghost given unto him. And what is still more remarkable, his mother under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost, attributed joy to him:—"For lo," said she to Mary, "as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, *the babe leaped in my womb for joy*;" Luke i. 41—44. Who can explain this fact? And yet who can doubt it? So also the Lord said unto Jeremiah,—"*Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations*;" Jer. i. 5. See also the case of Samuel, the child of a mournful mother's prayer's; 1 Sam. i. 27, 28. And as the great and good God is thus divinely gracious to the soul of an infant, from the earliest period of its becoming "a living soul," so the same grace may work along with Divine Providence in producing extraordinary beauty even in the formation of the body, as a token of his special observance of all that can befall an infant in his infant days. At once the mind will here recollect the affecting history of Moses who was "exceeding fair,"—literally, "fair to God," Acts vii. 20, whose very countenance indicated something more than ordinary to his oppressed parents, who saw from his birth that he was "a proper child,"—a child of extraordinary comeliness and beauty: Heb. xi. 23, and whose loveliness touched the heart of Pharaoh's daughter so deeply when "she saw the child; and behold, the babe wept," Exod. ii. 6, that she took him, and had

him nourished and brought up for her own son. Had Pharaoh's daughter more of compassion for a weeping infant than our Jesus? Would she *adopt the outcast infant of a slave for her own son*, and will he *universally refuse infants an admission into his house*, which is the Church of the living God? Surely their tears, the fruit and punishment of sin, never personally committed by them, he will graciously accept instead of penitential tears, which they are incapable of shedding; and he will graciously interpret their cries and convulsive sobs when life quivers and is departing, as prayers or expressions indicating the need of mercy. As when a rare musician is tuning up his instrument, various harsh and discordant sounds are heard, which, when the instrument is well-tuned, give place to sounds of the sweetest melody; so the piercing shrieks and cries of infants under their sufferings, sometimes almost to the last moment of life, are but the afflictive means employed by the Divine Spirit of tuning up their souls for the sweet melody of heaven, so that the last sigh or groan on earth shall be instantly followed by the joyous hallelujahs of eternity. For of all Infants it may be said—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," Rev. xiv. 13, for if they have no works to follow them, neither have they any sins to accuse them, but a Saviour ready to receive them to his kingdom and glory, for which they have been prepared by the regenerating grace of the Spirit of God.

It may be said that the instances mentioned of John, and Jeremiah, and Samuel, and Moses, relate to *extraordinary characters*, and are not therefore of *general application*. True, *not to the same extent*; but then to some extent they will admit of general application.

Moses' communion with God, for instance, in manhood, was very extraordinary, and so in its fullest extent not of general application, for his election went beyond the ordinary election of even God's faithful servants; but then to some extent it is of general application, and exhibits a beautiful view of the common privilege of holy fellowship with God, which all God's servants in various degrees enjoy. So what was peculiar and special in these chosen babes is but an illustration of the grace and good-will to all infants born into our world of him who hath "ordained that out of the mouth of babes and sucklings he will perfect praise;" Psalm. viii. 2. And these histories are recorded, as for other reasons in general, so for this reason in particular, to encourage mothers, or parents, to fervent prayer for their offspring, even before they are brought forth; and to be very watchful and observant of gracious providences towards their little ones, from the hour that they are born. But does it not manifestly appear an inconsistent thing to pray for an infant before it is born, and then when it is born, instead of imitating good Hannah, and "lending the child to the Lord as long as he lives," 1 Sam. i. 27—to say, Stop awhile, Lord, till he becomes a man, and then if he chooses to serve thee he may, and I shall be glad? Shall a woman have compassion on the son of her womb, and nourish him with the milk of her breasts, which God in his good providence hath provided for the sustenance of the child's life, and yet believe that Christ hath no compassion for the soul of her child, or a compassion which hath not made any provision for its spiritual benefit, as an infant, in his Church? The simple truth lies here,—The cases adduced of the rare examples of Moses, &c., are Facts;—and *one Fact is as*

good as a million to upset a Theory;—and those Facts do most clearly overthrow the Theory against Infant Baptism, *drawn from the incapability of Infants to understand the nature, or perform the conditions* of that ordinance:—for it is plain from those examples that *divine grace can precede the exercise of the human understanding*, so that the objection is mere talk, sound without substance, and is utterly futile and vain. “Thou,” Lord, “*preventest* them with the blessings of goodness;” Psalm xxi. 3. For a further elucidation of this fact, see some of the preceding and following pages.

As to the resurrection of the dead, and the universal judgment of mankind, infants, no less than adults, are interested in those great scripture doctrines, and are personally concerned in all the events to which they refer. “And I saw,” saith Saint John, “a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, *small and great*, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works;” Rev. xx. 11, 12. They who have died in infancy shall stand with all mankind before the judgment seat of Christ, and be also judged, not indeed for *actions*, since they never performed any for which they are accountable; but yet a judgment will be requisite for them, equally with others, in order that their *moral state and character* may be made known, that so they may be *recognized as righteous*, and with all who are on the right hand of the judge, hear the sentence,—“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" Matt. xxv. 34. And thus the whole glory of their salvation will be ascribed to the Redeemer; for it will be seen that the obtaining of that salvation has not been owing to natural descent from virtuous parents, nor to any natural goodness and innocency of their own, nor to certain peculiar circumstances arising from the nation or country where they were born; *but that independently of all these considerations they have been saved through the blood of the cross*, which brought them to glory, though they never knew or heard thereof, till, through its precious merits they passed within the veil, to behold "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" Rev. xiii. 8. We therefore "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," over our departed infants, knowing that they "have received the atonement;" Rom. v. 11. And we further "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ" over every infant born into the world as a subject of the atonement; and know that it is our duty, and rejoice that it is our privilege to present our Infants to Christ in Baptism, as their Redeemer and our Redeemer, knowing that he who hath already purchased salvation for them by the shedding of his precious blood, hath, along with that redemption, procured for them *a right and title, through him*, to be received into his visible church, and thereby constituted its members from their infant days. Baptism then is not a *natural privilege* derivable from parents, but a *gracious privilege* derived from Christ, the common hope of fathers and sons for all generations. It is perpetuated through the instrumentality of parents, as is existence and every blessing; but "Christ is all and in all;" Col. iii 11.

CHAPTER IV.

~~~~~ INFANTS WERE DEDICATED TO GOD'S SERVICE BEFORE THE COMING OF CHRIST. ~~~~~

Infants were dedicated to God for *four thousand years*, from the creation of the world to the coming of Christ; therefore we conclude that infants have a right to a similar privilege under the Christian Dispensation, according to the entire scope and tenor of God's Covenant with mankind :—this is the second Fact proposed for examination. A considerable portion of what has been stated in the preceding chapter has so close a connection with the purport of our present argument, that it would be an unnecessary multiplication of words to pursue the subject at length. An occasional reference may be made to what has been already advanced, the rest must be kept in mind. Now the ages which passed away before the Messiah was born, may be divided into two periods of nearly equal length; reckoning *two thousand* years from the creation to the hundredth year of Abraham's life, when circumcision was established; and a second two thousand years from that time to the birth of Christ. This is sufficiently accurate as a general statement, for the sake of arrangement, although according to the chronological dates in the margin of our Bibles, rather more than two thousand and one hundred years belong to the Abrahamic period. Each period will be treated of in a separate section.

SECTION I.

From the Creation to Abraham's receiving the Law of Circumcision.

Concerning this period it must be acknowledged that we can only adduce *inferential* proof in favour of the fact sought to be ascertained. But this need not excite surprise, considering the extreme brevity of the sacred history in regard to those times. The three first chapters of Genesis are a narrative of the creation of the world and man, and of his fall, and restoration to a new probation under the covenant of grace. There remain but fourteen chapters, namely from the fourth to the seventeenth of Genesis for the history of nigh two thousand years. And the greater portions of those chapters are occupied in an account of the Deluge, the dispersion of mankind, and the earlier part of the personal and family history of the patriarch Abraham. A few other facts are mentioned in an incidental manner; and from some of them we glean the remarks now about to be offered for consideration. But we do not profess to have any thing explicit to produce in the way of command, relative to this subject, during that period; nor was it needful, since the Holy Ghost in due time would make known the divine will when he should cause an inspired record of the law of circumcision to be written and preserved, which, *as a part and continuation* of God's gracious purposes of mercy previously revealed, should indicate *what had been* the known will of God, by those who had lived in the still earlier ages of the world. In this respect the law of infant dedication to God, and the law of sacrifices, stand precisely in the same position, for we have no command with

regard to either preserved in the Scriptures till the days of Abram ; at which time, *on the very first occasion when God promised Abram posterity, the previously existing law of sacrifices was renewed in the way of positive injunction.* “And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying, This shall not be thine heir ; *but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.* And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old,” &c. See the entire passage ; Gen. xv. 1—21. And having read the chapter attentively, then weigh the following brief remarks. First :—The *person* who appeared to Abram is not only called “the Lord,” or Jehovah, and “the Lord God,” but also “the word of the Lord,” verses 1, 4, by whom both Jewish and Christian commentators understand Christ, styled also “the word,” by Saint John, i. 1, &c. Here we have it clearly revealed as a fact that Christ the Redeemer is deeply interested in man’s posterity, so much so, that from his foreknowledge ariseth a *gracious* purpose concerning a child yet to be born ; from whence it is fair to infer that he must be gracious to such child when it actually is born. For if an unbegotten child can yet be regarded by him as *a child of promise, must it not of necessity have an interest in the promise from its very birth*, and so be entitled to some outward expression or acknowledgment thereof, in the way of dedication to him in and by whom the promise was made ? Nor was this an exempt case, for it related *to heirship, and so extended to many generations ;—an heirship by birth*, as distinguished from, and in opposition to, an heirship by *adult adoption*, verse 3, and, as to its spiritual benefits and signification, *virtually including all nations and families of the earth*, as well the Gen-

tiles as the Jews. For though of necessity the *peculiar* privilege of being the Messiah's progenitors was restricted to one branch of the patriarchal family, in the way of lineal descent, yet the circumstance of its being *an heirship by birth*, so that in each succeeding generation *each child was heir as soon as born*, even before it received the sign and seal of circumcision, establishes the principle of the gracious relation and rights of Infants in all ages of the world. Secondly :—This also was *a covenant transaction*, 18, and so was more than a mere personal matter between Abram and his God ; for as before shewn *every* covenant which God hath made with man taketh in his posterity *equally with himself* at the very time it is established. In this instance it is remarkable that the name of Abram himself is not inserted at all in the covenant promise, *but his seed only*. “ In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “ *Unto thy seed* have I given this land,” &c., &c. ; v. 18. Thirdly :—This covenant relating as well to Abram's seed as to Abram himself was most deeply solemn and interesting, because associated with Abram's *personal justification before God* ; for when the Lord said unto him, “ *So shall thy seed be,*” he believed in the Lord, *and he counted it to him for righteousness* ; v. 5, 6, and Rom. iv. 3—5. Wherefore justification, and so all experimental and practical religion, *are wrought up with the recognition of our children's covenant relation to God* ; for this forms a constituent part and element of right, true, and saving faith ; excepting where invincible prejudices bias the understanding, when God may graciously accept the heads of families in his Son, notwithstanding they own not their children's relation to God. But had Abram

been like them, God would not have accepted Abram. Fourthly :—As the law of sacrifices, now for the first time written in the Scriptures, justifies the supposition and belief that such law had been previously made known, though not expressly recorded, because sacrifices had been offered up from the beginning ; so the promise concerning Isaac, and the subsequent law of circumcision, justify the supposition that Infants had been regarded from the beginning as belonging to the Lord, and the dedication of them to his service as a duty, because we have distinct intimations of *a religious acknowledgment* connected with their birth and name. Moreover it is to be steadily borne in mind, that while we have a series of inferential proofs of this class in favor of the fact of an early dedication to God, there are *no drawbacks* from the imperfect evidence we thus collect by any opposing kind of deductions, which would weaken the ground on which we stand, when looking back to the principles and practice of the remotest ages of our world.

Now the general covenant of redemption having been made with our first parents in Paradise, and accompanied with so many indications of restoring mercy towards them, insomuch that poor fallen Adam is designated in the holy gospel—“ *the son of God*,” Luke iii 38 ; and their posterity having been included in its benefits, and *expressly mentioned* in the first promise, it might be reasonably expected that, from the earliest being of their children, they would in some manner acknowledge so undeserved a favor from the Lord. No method of doing this could be more simple than the practice of giving to the child *some significant and religious name*. This would be the most natural way for man to exercise his powers, and express

his hopes ; and would well accord with his circumstances, and the previous habits acquired in the employment of his understanding. He had known for instance that the Lord God had given appropriate names to every part of the creation which he had made, Gen. i. 5, 8, 10, and especially that he had given to human kind the general name of man : “ for he called *their* name Adam, *in the day when they were created* ;” Gen. v. 2. In his innocent state, as a token of his sovereignty over the inferior creatures, and as an evidence of the perfection of his understanding, he had been allowed, or rather directed, himself to give names to the different animals ; which names are generally supposed to have been indicative of their several natures ; Gen. ii. 19, 20. In particular it belonged to him to designate his own co-partner in the joys of Paradise. “ And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : *she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man* ;” Gen. ii. 23. In that name there was a *religious signification* ; it was *commemorative* both of her origin, and of her near, and dear, and eternal relation to him. Now, that practice of a religious commemoration, signified by an appropriate name, was continued after the fall. And what is still more remarkable, when viewed in connection with Gen. xv., already commented on, the first instance of the kind after the fall *is closely associated with sacrifice*. For so we read :—“ And Adam called his wife’s name Eve—or Life—because she was the mother of all living. And then follows :—unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make *coats of skins*, and clothed them ;” Gen. iii. 20, 21. These original garments are generally supposed to have been the skins of animals slain by divine direction for

sacrifice; by which circumstance we are taught that for our very clothing, and every other benefit of a gracious Providence, we are indebted to the great work of redemption, the source of life and salvation

Now from this outline of man's earliest history, we may infer two things as highly probable, and against which there lie no counter-probabilities. First, That when a child should be born unto him, he would at some suitable time give unto it a *commemorative* name; and secondly, That it would be done *religiously*, and contain some reference to his circumstances, and so be indirectly at least associated with sacrifice and redemption. And certainly such religious and commemorative act *would virtually imply the fact of Infant Dedication to God in his Church*, although we have no account of any express ordinance or institution observed on such an occasion. For our first parents were at that time *the church*, and *the only church*; wherefore the act of dedicating their Infants to God was as much *a church act as a family act*; Adam was both father and priest, as was Abraham afterwards, *nor could he separate the official from the natural relation in the performance of a religious duty*. So that the first member of God's church, after the original pair, *was an infant*; for it would have been strange indeed if the very *first act* of the *first priest*, after the birth of his *first child*, *should have been one of reprobation, casting away his own offspring, after he had believingly recognized the mother as "the mother of all living."* That would have been in fact the rejection of *all his subsequent posterity*, that is of all mankind; and so the church must have begun and ended with the first pair, unless it had pleased God afterwards

to gather in here and there one out of the mass to preserve its existence for future years. But this would have created a wide distinction of mankind into two classes from the very beginning, heathens and such as were not heathen, similar to that which afterwards obtained between Jews and Gentiles; whereas we meet with no traces of such distinction, and are certain that it existed not, for then had the calling of Abraham, and the election of his posterity to be God's peculiar people been unnecessary, seeing such a peculiar people were already in being, distinct from the rest of mankind.* But until Abram's time the only distinctions known related to *characters, not to two classes, as of God's appointment*; all men had equal religious rights and privileges to engage in the worship of God. Thus Cain, the first-born of mankind, drew near to the altar, as well as his younger brother; Gen. iv. 4. This shows that they were *both in the visible church from infancy*; for had this not been the case the character and temper of the elder *would have forbidden his introduction into it in riper years*; and he should have been expostulated with as a heathen, for presuming to bring any offering, prior to his initiation into the church. But instead of this, God recognized his right to approach the altar, though he refused to accept his offering; and remonstrated with him for his error and sin, and taught him to amend.

It will be instructive to notice the import of the names of Adam's sons, three of his immediate descendants being mentioned in the sacred history. The earliest fact re-

* The word "Gentiles," in Gen. x. 5, simply signifies *nations*; and is so rendered in the last clause of that same verse, and in several other places in the same chapter. For the sake of accuracy it should never be translated Gentiles, in any copies of the Scripture, until after the calling of Abraham, when the distinction began to be maintained in the world.

corded concerning man after his expulsion from Eden is, the birth of his first-born son. "And Adam knew *Eve* his wife; and she conceived, and bare *Cain*, and said, I have *gotten* a man from the Lord;" Gen. iv. 1. It is not a little remarkable that in the first family *the mother* named the sons, see the Hebrew Text of Gen. iv. 1—25, although, from subsequent history, that honor and duty evidently belonged to the father; compare Gen. xxi. 3, Luke i. 62, and Matt. i. 21. It may be *this incident* is recorded to inspire us with hope concerning the salvation of both our progenitors. Adam's faith was conspicuous in calling his wife's name, Eve; her faith and piety in the names she imposed on her sons. And hereby we see that notwithstanding their unhappy fall, they were not "unequally yoked," 2 Cor. vi. 14, but still "heirs together of the grace of life," 1 Pet. iii. 7, and therefore "she was saved in childbearing," they "continuing in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety;" 1 Tim. ii. 13—15. She called his name Cain, or *Gain*, because she had *gained* him from the Lord. She received him *as the Lord's gift*, and, grateful for her mercies, she would not have her child *nameless*, or merely give it a name, as one might do to a horse or beast, for the sake of calling it something, *without any reference to religion or its ordinances*; but as an act of faith, and in the spirit of devotion she said, "I have gotten a man *from the Lord*." Now if *from* the Lord, he belonged to that Lord the Redeemer from whom she had received him; although he afterwards became a personal apostate from the covenant of grace, when he refused to hearken to that gracious God, who still waited to shew him mercy, and keep him back from impending destruction;" Gen. iv. 4—8.

The next son of our first parents was called Abel, or Hebel, that is, vanity. This is the word so often repeated in Eccles. i. 2. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher," "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." It occurs again in Psalm xxxix. 5, "verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." It is probable that his parents called him Abel, because they had had by the time of his birth increased proofs of the bitter effects of the fall, both in themselves and in their posterity.

Their third son, of whom any particular record is preserved, was called Seth. Now the force, and beauty, and as one might say, *the high prophetic import of this name*, does not strike an ordinary reader of the Holy Scriptures. But only let it be observed that this name is taken from the very words of the great original promise of redemption; Gen. iii. 15; or rather that it is an embodying of the promise itself in a name, and every one must be delightfully impressed with the faith and piety it exemplifies. The variation of phraseology in our authorized version prevents this from being perceived, or even thought of, however necessary that variation may be to make good English of the translation. But this proper noun, *Seth*, is derived from the same root as the verb "*put*," in the promise; and is also the same verb employed by his mother in assigning the reason for his name, and is rendered in our translation, "appointed." But if we bring the passages together, according to their correspondence in the original text, we shall at once see the relation of the one to the other. "And the Lord God said, I will put"—or *set*—"enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed;" Gen. iii. 15. "And she bare a son, and called his name Seth, or *Set*; for God, said she, hath

appointed"—*hath set*—"me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew; Gen. iv. 25. It is difficult to retain the word in our version, so as to make the allusion clear, without marring the sense; but that allusion evidently existed in the mind of Eve, and is contained in the text. It seems as if the whole of that solemn declaration, Gen. iii. 15, had been deeply pondered in her heart; her allusion to it implies that she discerned the enmity of the wicked one, as it had been working in her first-born when he slew his brother, notwithstanding her early hopes and prayers and grateful acknowledgments at his birth; and yet it intimates her believing determination, after all the calamities she had witnessed, to cling to the *promissory part* of that declaration, and look for that other seed who should bruise the serpent's head. Therefore she called his name Set, or Seth. And in fact here began a godly line, which was perpetuated for several generations, Gen. v., and from this very line sprang ultimately the Christ, the Saviour of the world; Luke iii. 38. And it is not a little gratifying to find that we have this very ancient word,—as old almost as the foundations of the world,—*transferred with scarcely any alteration to our own language*, and continuing to our own time, and used very nearly in the same sense as in the beginning: our verb set, bearing amongst other meanings the signification of *put*, planted, determined, fixed, *appointed*; hence our version of the original word as before quoted in Gen. iii. 15, and iv. 25. Thus amongst the first generations of man, *the name of every child was inseparably interwoven with religious truth*; so that at a time when revelation was limited, and the means of instruction were few, every child was constituted from his birth, as it

were, "a preacher of righteousness," by the import of his name, as it taught some weighty lesson of humiliation, or faith, or godliness, to the solitary families that were multiplying in the earth. And the impartation of the name being not a *common*, but a *religious* act; it was in substance the same as afterwards prevailed in circumcision, and as is now perpetuated in Baptism, *and included in its performance the reception of Infants into the then existing church of God.*

It is unnecessary to pursue these remarks any further, or the *religious import* of every name recorded in Gen. v. might be pointed out, and of several succeeding names. But there is one fact too remarkable to be omitted. Many ancient names were not only *religious*, and sacredly given in connection with divine ordinances, but also *prophetic*, *and so were ordained by divine inspiration*; so that in future years, the name was found to be *the germ of prophecies*, extending to amazingly remote events and far distant generations. It is only necessary here to refer to the names of Noah's sons, as expanded in the prophecies; Gen. ix. 25—27; and of Jacob's sons, each of whose name forms the basis of a beautiful prophecy, when the venerable patriarch blessed them on his dying bed;" Gen. xlix. Yea, there was one illustrious prophetic name given on earth, which shall endure to eternity itself, and be invested with a glory that shall never fade away. And the angel said unto Joseph—"she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name *Jesus*; *for he shall save* his people from their sins;" Matt. i. 21. This was Noah's "Lord God of Shem," and Jacob's "Shiloh;" and David's "Lord God of Israel," of whom it is said, "And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole

earth be filled with his glory;" Psalm lxxii. 19. Now every one must admit that prophetic names could only be given by the spirit of prophecy. And it is moreover evident that in every case they were given *not to adults*, (although a few instances occur in which they received a new name,) but to *children*, either before, or at, or soon after they were born. How much soever incidental and comparatively trifling matters, of a personal nature, and mixed up with family differences, may sometimes appear to have given occasion to the name, as in the case of most of Jacob's sons, that does not set aside the reality of divine suggestion and superintendence, with a view to further enlargement in future prophecies, but only makes the divine guidance more remarkable, shewing how easily God can educe the accomplishment of his purposes out of existing circumstances, without minutely ordaining circumstances themselves, in order to the fulfilment of his will. But all this has a direct bearing on the subject in hand, God's ancient regard to our infant race. *Would he have caused infants to be invested with a prophetic name, if infants in those days were not members of his patriarchial or antediluvian church?* We believe not; no more than he would have inspired an adult heathen of later times with the spirit of prophecy. Such special instances of divine favor therefore have a benign aspect towards all infants, and may well induce the inquiry, If God hath shown such care and mindfulness of little ones, as on some occasions to assign them a name in his great condescension, can it be right for Christian ministers to disown them, and refuse them a name in baptism? If an infant could be formerly in effect a *prophet* in the church by virtue of his name, are infants now to be

reckoned incapable of being *even members* of the church, and unfit for a place in it? What have they done? Wherein have they offended, that they are to be so unceremoniously cut off from their ancient, sacred, and highly valuable privileges? God chose at sundry times, and in divers manners, to manifest his grace to the children of men. But in whatever manner he made known his graciousness, *was he ever wont suddenly to withdraw his kindness, without fault committed by those who were the subjects of it?* Is this the manner of the Lord God? Doth he govern by caprice? Hath he no fixed principles of government? Is he all *for* infants at one time, and all *against them* at another? Gathering them into his church *in the mass* in one age, and shutting them out *in the mass* in a succeeding age? O let not man charge God foolishly; for he is in regard to infants, as to the world at large, “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;” Heb. xiii. 8. This will be made apparent as we proceed to consider the next great period of somewhat more than two thousand years.

SECTION II.

From Abraham to Christ.

We commence the second era of two thousand years with that eventful period of Abram's life which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. The whole chapter is full of interest, containing as it does a particular account of the covenant of circumcision, when the venerable patriarch was ninety years old and nine, and before Isaac was born; at which time also both Abram and

Sarai's names were changed, the one to Abraham, and the other to Sarah, in *commemoration* of the distinguished favor God had shewn to his chosen servant and handmaid, and their posterity. Concerning this memorable transaction the following topics, on which we shall not enlarge, are worthy of deep and serious attention.

1. The basis or foundation of this covenant with Abraham. It was not based on works, but on the Covenant of Redemption; and was, on God's part, a fresh manifestation of his grace towards his favored servant whom he had chosen. This is too plain to need much proving. For Abram, as all mankind, was by nature a sinner; and although he had now been of a long time in a state of friendship with God, yet he was only reconciled to God by Christ, and he received all the communications of the divine goodness through that same Redeemer. Now, concurrent with this high transaction, there was granted unto Abram a *renewed sense* of the divine favor; for that Abraham was *previously* justified there can be no doubt, since he was actuated by an *obedient faith* from the beginning; "*by faith* Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, *obeyed*; and he went out, not knowing whither he went;" Heb. xi. 8. Thus that "just man lived by faith," nor did he ever "draw back" from it; Heb. x. 38. Nevertheless, circumcision was wrought up with his own personal experience of the favor of God; for the same *promises* which God made him at the beginning were confirmed thereby. He who said to him at the first, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. xii. 3, and afterwards, "So shall thy seed be," Gen. xv. 5, now appeared to him again, and said, "I am the Almighty

God; walk before me and be thou perfect ;" Gen. xvii. 1. Now God never reveals himself as gracious, either to a penitent sinner when he first believeth, or to the holiest believer after he is justified, but only in Christ Jesus ; nor doth he ever make a gracious promise, but only in and through the Saviour ; 2 Cor. i. 20 ; so that whereas both divine manifestations and divine promises went along with the law of circumcision, that law must of necessity have been founded on redemption, and must be reckoned a part and continuance of God's merciful purpose to save mankind by his Son. It was therefore a *gracious* law, and a *gracious* dispensation, and intended to prepare the way for, and *be the part of a plan of ushering in the still more abundant grace of the gospel of God our Saviour.* And indeed he who afterwards became incarnate, was himself the very person who now appeared to Abraham, as the Almighty God, and who " went up from Abraham, when he left off talking with him ;" Gen. xvii. 22. The covenant maker on this occasion was none other than Christ the Lord ; how certain then is the fact that it was based on his redemption.

2. *The principles unalterably established by the law of circumcision are next to be regarded.* It hath unequivocally decided these two important facts : --First, That Infants have a personal interest in the covenant of God ; and secondly, that an inability to perform the conditions of the covenant *is no bar to their right to its initiatory ordinance and consequent blessings.*

Infants have most assuredly a personal interest in the covenant of God. For the *promissory* part of it belongs to them, inasmuch as the promise was to Abraham *and his seed* ; and the *legal* part of it belongs to them also,

inasmuch as the law ran thus, "And he that is *eight days old* shall be circumcised among you, *every man child in your generations*;" Gen. xvii. 12. So then Isaac at eight days old had as real and as large a share in the promise as Abraham at a hundred years. And so important was this part of the condition of the covenant engagement, that Abraham's own faith would not have been accepted, had it not equally embraced his posterity with himself, so that both he and they, *in the same ordinance, and exactly in the same manner, and without respect to age*, were dedicated to the service of the true and living God. Abraham, as the first of circumcised men, was precisely in the same relative position as the first baptized men, at the opening of the Gospel Dispensation; or in any new region when the gospel is newly introduced amongst a people. Of course, in the very nature of things, *at the introduction of the ordinance*, the earliest subjects must of necessity be adults; but from that admitted fact, which no one ever denied, to infer that therefore it must *afterwards be restricted to adults*, is contrary to all reason and scripture. It much better agrees with scripture analogy to conclude, that as adult circumcision prepared the way for infant circumcision; so Adult Baptism prepared the way for Infant Baptism; that after the introduction of the ordinance, infant dedication to God should be the standing law thereof for all future generations. That infants really are interested in the covenant of God is then the first Fact clearly decided by the law relating to circumcision.

The Second Fact settled with equal clearness, and by divine authority, is, The inability of infants to perform the conditions of the covenant *is no bar to their right to*

its initiatory ordinance and consequent blessings.—Much of the baptismal controversy hinges here. Our Baptist brethren are accustomed to lay much stress upon it. They argue thus. It is written, “He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved :” *faith* is necessary to baptism, and must precede it ; but infants are incapable of believing, and therefore are not fit subjects for baptism.—To this argument of theirs it is commonly replied, —and the answer is unquestionably sound, just, and convincing,—if that argument bear correctly against infant baptism, *it bears equally against infant salvation.* For faith is surely as much necessary for salvation as it is to qualify for baptism. If therefore the want of personal faith, or rather, the want of a natural ability to exercise personal faith, unfits them for baptism, *it doth also unfit them for salvation* ; especially as it is added, “but he that believeth not shall be damned ;” Mark xvi. 16. Now this is a fair, solid, manly answer. It so commends itself to every man’s understanding ; has so much common sense in it ; and at the same time is taken so directly from the very terms and phraseology of the text from whence our brethren draw their objection, that it is not easy to grapple with it. Accordingly our Baptist brethren are accustomed to deal with it as the Pharisees of old dealt with the heavy burdens they laid on other men’s shoulders ; they never touch it with one of their fingers,—they give it the go-by,—they slip over the matter without scarcely noticing it, and sally forth anew with this same old futile objection, as though it had never been answered at all. *This is unfair.* Let them deal honestly with us, and tell us plainly whether as Christian men they do not feel a blessed hope that their own departed offspring, to

whom baptism was refused because they were not, in their sense of the term, believers, are, notwithstanding their want of personal faith, safe in the kingdom of God. Every good man and woman amongst the Baptists will answer, Yea.—Then leave that text in Mark's gospel alone ; for what sense is there in urging it against us any longer ? Why make a plaything of this portion of holy writ, bringing it forwards with mighty zeal to support *one view* of a case, and immediately, when in *all fairness*, your own argument is brought to bear on a *parallel view of the case*, dropping it altogether as if it were too hot to hold ?

But to this old objection, so strenuously maintained, it may be yet further replied, that *the law of circumcision had its conditions as well as the gospel of Christ*. Saint Paul speaks of circumcision as being “ the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith,” Rom. iv. 11, of which hereafter. So then, Abraham believed first, and afterwards was circumcised ; even as they to whom the gospel came in the earliest age first believed and then were baptised. Moreover, a condition was implied in the words which preceded circumcision : “ I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect.” But Isaac could neither understand that condition, nor yet be capable of exercising faith, when only eight days old ; and yet he was circumcised at that age by the express command of God. *This matter therefore is settled by divine authority,—settled for ever,—*and utterly annihilates the objection, because though urged by good and holy men, it is absolutely *antisciptural* in its character. *A new objection*, it is true, may be started, by saying, we have *no command* for infant baptism. *But that is altogether*

another thing, and does not touch *the principle* for which we now contend. If God hath accepted one infant in a conditional covenant, he may accept another; it matters not which the covenant is, whether Jewish or Christian: *the principle is the same in both*. Now God did accept not one infant only, but millions; not one generation only, but many generations, for more than two thousand years. Therefore *the principle*, that God can and will graciously accept infants as parties to a covenant, their inability to perform its conditions notwithstanding, is as firmly established, as it would have been if the entire ceremonial of circumcision had been designed to remain to the end of time.

3. There is but one point more to be elucidated, with regard to the law of circumcision, and that is, its intimate connection with the preceding era of two thousand years, and with the subsequent era that commenced with the Christian Dispensation. The Abrahamic and prophetic age formed as it were the connecting link between the two remoter eras, and unites them together, so that in passing from the one to the other, we behold one uniform revelation of the goodness and grace of God to the dying children of men, in the person, and government, and redemption of Jesus Christ his Son.

Now, whereas we have shewn that the covenant of circumcision was founded on redemption, it is clear that it introduced *no new principles*, but *only developed* more distinctly such as had been less perfectly understood by mankind before. Infant dedication to God did not begin with Abraham, any more than God's covenant with man began with Abraham; but the Abrahamic covenant took up the principle which had been established as we have

seen from the beginning, and *by formal law confirmed* what had been practised from the earliest increase in the first family of man. The only thing *new* in the appointment was *the outward rite*, as that also afterwards gave place to *baptism*. Isaac was indeed the first circumcised infant, but not the first infant consecrated to God, or accepted by him; for circumcision was *superadded* to former observances, not that it might be a means of abolishing, but of confirming, antecedent obligations, and privileges, and blessings. And associated with that design was the intention of God to make it introductory to the sacred and lasting privileges that should remain for the world in the *Christian Church* unto the end of time.

For the ancient and long-continued law of circumcision is most intimately connected with Christianity in the following particulars:—in its sameness of origin; in its essential character; in its holy conditions; in its spiritual import; and in its evangelical termination. Of each of these in order.

1. Christianity has its name from Christ, the Redeemer; and is that perfect system of divine truth and morals which he and his inspired Apostles taught; the whole glory and efficacy of which are derived from the great work of human redemption: circumcision is based on redemption also: see foregoing remarks.

2. Circumcision was a covenant transaction: Christianity is God's covenant with man; and both covenants were sealed with blood; the first with the blood of animal sacrifices, the second with the blood of Jesus, the Son of God.

3. Each covenant had its conditions, of which *faith was the chief condition under both dispensations*. For

which reason Abraham, with whom the former covenant was made, is so eminently commended for his faith above all other virtues, and hath been constituted, in subordination to Christ, the Father of all believers. And to shew in the most explicit manner the essential oneness of the two dispensations, Saint Paul expressly states that this honor was conferred on him, not in reference to Jewish believers only, but to Gentile believers also: to signify which seems to have been one reason, amongst others, why his name was changed from Abram to Abraham.—“And the scripture,” saith the Apostle, “foreseeing that God would justify *the heathen through faith*, preached before *the gospel unto Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, *they which be of faith* are blessed with faithful or *believing Abraham*.—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, that *the blessing of Abraham* might come *on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*; that we might receive *the promise* of the Spirit *through faith*!—And if ye be *Christ's*, then are ye *Abraham's seed*, and *heirs* according to the promise.—Now we brethren, *as Isaac was*, are the children of promise;” Gal. iii. 6—29, and iv. 28.—How clearly do these scriptures prove, that *the condition of each covenant, and the covenant itself, were substantially the same*!

In like manner, when writing to the Romans, the Apostle saith:—“Cometh this blessedness,” (of forgiveness) “then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say *that faith* was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received *the sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the

righteousness of *the faith* which he had yet being uncircumcised ; that he might be *the father of all them that believe*, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also : and *the father* of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of *that faith of our father Abraham*, which he had being yet uncircumcised ;” Rom. iv. 9—12. Now how exactly does this tally with “ He that *believeth* and is *baptised* shall be saved ;” only putting baptism in the place of circumcision ? The dispensations then were substantially one, and *the condition uniformly the same*.

Now, on this undeniable fact, we build an argument. The faith being precisely the same in regard to its object, Christ ; in regard to its foundation, the covenant promise of God ; and in regard to its end, Salvation ;—*it can never be that there should be an intended discrepancy, in the midst of such delightful harmony and agreement, as to the subjects capable of being benefited and interested in these high transactions ;—Abraham’s faith taking in his posterity, and ours excluding our offspring, from distinct covenant relation to God*. For though Abraham were justified as a believer, before he received circumcision, yet when that was added as a *sign and seal* of the righteousness of his then existing faith, *to what did that faith refer but a believing circumcising of his posterity also*, and of Isaac when he was born, which was on Abraham’s part *but a continued putting forth of the same faith*, without the exercise of which, in that way, with regard to his infant child, *he would have ceased to be a believer*. But now if we refuse, after our own baptism, to bring our Isaacs in the same ordinance to God, *as our*

and their covenant God in Christ,—we may have faith, —and it may be to us saving faith, and not obstruct personal justification, supposing we entertain Baptist scruples, —yet after all, in one *material*, though we would not say to such persons *absolutely essential*, point, *it is not the faith of Abraham : the identity of faith*, for which St. Paul so powerfully argues, *in one important particular, is utterly lost* : nay, more, *the whole order of its exercise is completely reversed*. For his faith required a distinct recognition of his posterity as the children of the covenant ; but *our faith* requires a complete religious disownment of our children *in this respect*, till the time comes when they shall choose for themselves whether they will or will not come into a covenant relation with God. When therefore we include, as in Christian charity we are bound to do, our sincerely-loved Baptist brethren, in the general testimony of Saint Paul, that “ Abraham is the father of *us all*,” we cannot help feeling that *some modification* of the noble sentiment is requisite *with regard to them* ; and our imagination would almost fancy, that if the venerable patriarch were deputed to visit Christian Churches, he would give our Baptist brethren *very stern rebukes* ; and remembering his Isaac, would *hardly* acknowledge them as his right, true, and legitimate spiritual seed, *were it not* that their own personal faith and many Christian excellencies and virtues, induced the conviction, that for themselves, they truly are worthy of being counted the elect children of God.

4. As to the spiritual import of circumcision, that is well expressed by Moses in the following words :—“ And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, *and the heart of thy seed*, to love the Lord thy God with all

thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live ;” Deut. xxx. 6. Now these words form also a part of the gospel of Christ : Mark xii. 30. 31.

5. Finally : circumcision had an evangelical termination. For that it was intended gradually to pass away into Christian Baptism is fairly implied in the association of one with the other, and the spiritual import of both, as mentioned by Saint Paul. “ In whom,” saith he, (that is, in Christ) “ ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ ; Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead ;” Col. ii. 11, 12. And the same reflection arises from the consideration that both ordinances were initiatory ; each under the dispensation to which it was assigned ; wherefore they who had been circumcised under the old dispensation were required, on believing in Christ, *to be baptized also* ; but the Gentiles who believed in Christ were *baptized without circumcision* ; which double view of the subject satisfactorily proves that *circumcision was to yield unto, and ultimately be exchanged for, the later ordinance of baptism*. Moreover, that this was the real purpose of God may be concluded from the reference which every thing ceremonial and ritual under the law had to something that should be more permanent under the gospel. But circumcision, *as an ordinance, has nothing corresponding to it*, and is not, in that respect, so much as the shadow of good things to come, if baptism answer not thereto. And yet Saint Peter supposes this, when, in the way of analogy, he saith, “ The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now

save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God ;" 1 Pet. iv. 21. Here it is strongly intimated that baptism as an ordinance doth succeed to circumcision under the law. And the like truth is intimated by Saint Paul in that beautiful metaphor he employs, when he represents the Gentiles as "cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree;" Rom. xi. 24. Now baptism is the outward ordinance, by which, on believing in Christ, the Gentiles "were *grafted among*" the Jews; Rom. xi. 17. But if baptism succeed not to circumcision, we are rather *planted ourselves a new and distinct stock*, wholly separate from that which was ancient, instead of being grafted on and springing out of it, as the Apostle affirms we are. If however baptism be the evangelical termination of circumcision, *then all the religious rights and privileges of the one ordinance are transferred to the other*, so that infant baptism succeeds to infant circumcision. Allowing the premises, it is impossible to avoid this conclusion. Of this deduction our Baptist brethren are fully sensible. *Aware of the consequence*, they allow not the correctness of the views or statement from whence it is drawn. Here comes in the warping influence of prejudice, in favor of their notions about exclusive adult baptism; but for such a bias of mind, the truth would appear clear as the light of day. Perceiving the drift of the argument, they allow not the premises; and so they make circumcision *to end in just nothing*; and pass on to defend their opinions *from an appeal to the New Testament alone*; the examination of which will form the subject of our next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

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INFANT BAPTISM IS SANCTIONED IN THE NEW  
TESTAMENT.  
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We are now come to that portion of the sacred canon which is most generally appealed to by those who conscientiously oppose Infant Baptism. They conceive that the New Testament contains decisive evidence of the correctness of their views and conduct. We are of a contrary opinion. We, therefore, proceed to elucidate our third Fact, which has been already stated in the following terms: "Infant Baptism is sanctioned by the *principles, incidental occurrences, and spirit*, of the New Testament records, viewed in their connection with the preceding revelations of God's will, as made known in the Old Testament, on which comprehensive and scriptural ground we believe a right to baptism is secured to infants in perpetuity in the Gospel of God our Saviour." To do justice to this important branch of our common Christianity, it will be necessary to subdivide into a few distinct sections the general topic to be discussed and enlarged upon throughout this chapter.

SECTION I.

Further remarks on circumcision; and the objection taken from the want of command to baptize infants, examined.

We begin with a few further remarks, illustrative of

the observations made in the conclusion of the last chapter. It is of great importance to hold our Baptist brethren to this point. Their desire to shrink from it must only make us the more strenuous in our efforts to maintain it. For it is not with us a matter of "doubtful disputation," as the Apostle speaks, Rom. xiv. 1,—and so to be conceded for the sake of peace, and from an ardent wish to promote unity and concord ; but regarding it as a portion of divine truth, and as interwoven with the entire system of divine truth, we cannot yield an inch of ground in this friendly strife, although we can cordially embrace our sometimes warm opponents in our loving hearts. We return then to the contest.

Aware of the strength of the argument in favor of Infant dedication to God in a religious ordinance that may be drawn from circumcision, our Baptist brethren endeavour to set it aside, by stating that that ordinance and its concomitants *belonged entirely to the Jewish dispensation*, and is therefore to be classed amongst the ritual ceremonies of that era which has long since passed away. It is certainly very convenient to dispose of the matter in this wholesale way ; but in doing so we entirely lose sight of the *connection* subsisting between the law and the gospel, Moses and Christ ; or rather, the *continued and unbroken connection between the several successive and enlarging dispensations of grace* which were granted to mankind, till, in the fulness of time, the final and complete manifestation of God's love and mercy appeared in the gift of Jesus Christ his Son. To treat the subject in this summary method, is to represent Christianity *as an entirely new revelation* of God's will and purposes, and as a scheme disjointed, separated, and wholly unconnected with any

thing that had gone before. According to this notion, the Gospel is made to contain *quite new principles*; whereas it appears to us that, from first to last, there is *nothing new in principle in the divine economy*, but only a gradual enlargement of one perfect plan of saving mankind, which had been determined on by God from the beginning of the world. Nay more; it is to teach that the Gospel brings forth not merely *new principles*, but *directly opposite principles*, to those which are contained in the Old Testament. For the difference between infant circumcision and exclusive adult baptism is *so great*, that they can only be set *in complete opposition* the one to the other, which indeed appears to be admitted by our Baptist brethren; and thus Christ and Moses are *at variance*, and Judaism and Christianity have two *conflicting legislators*, and cannot have been under the guidance of *one and the same Spirit* of holiness and truth. And yet God had said unto his ancient servant Moses, in reference to the Messiah:—"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *like unto thee*," Deut. xviii. 18. But Jesus *is not like* unto Moses, he is *unlike* him, and sends his ministers *to undo* what Moses had commanded *to be done*, if Moses received infants into the church of God, and we are altogether to reject them. Wherefore then did Peter, when filled with the Holy Ghost, with so much energy quote this very scripture, Acts iii. 19—26, and inform the Jews at the same time that they were "the children of the *prophets and of the covenant which God had made with their fathers*," if the grand *principle* of that covenant was then "decaying and waxing old, and ready to vanish away?" Heb. viii. 13. But if we allow that rituals may change, *without*

changing the principles they were appointed for a season to serve, then do we perceive an appropriateness in the Apostle's quotation, and a *correspondence* between Moses and Christ in all things ; he is "*like*" unto him, while superior to him also, as the Lord of all. And for this reason Moses and Elias came and rendered homage unto him on the mount of transfiguration, for that the system of divine truth is essentially one in all ages.

Now that these sentiments are thoroughly in accordance with God's holy word, and are justly applied to the matter of infant baptism, may be shewn from a variety of considerations. Such, for instance, as the interesting fact witnessed by all the inspired writers, that Jesus Christ was made, as concerning the flesh, of "*the seed of Abraham* ;" Heb. ii. 16. Now, it can scarcely be credited, by an unbiassed mind, that he who was *Abraham's seed*, and yet *Abraham's God*, came into the world *to annihilate Abraham's covenant*, in that main feature of it which he had himself established by express law, and required its observance in future generations. He might alter the *sign*, the *seal*, if he chose so to do in his infinite wisdom, and exchange circumcision for baptism ; but who can believe that he would make so essential an alteration *in the covenant itself*, that *in fact it should be altogether a new one*, and scarcely bear any relation to the former. Wherefore then was he made of "*Abraham's seed*," if he would not *ratify* Abraham's covenant, but *repudiate it* ? Why did he not spring from the stock of the Gentiles, that he might more effectually set up a new church economy and order, in opposition to that old legal economy of former times ;—the one taking in infants as members, the other refusing them any place or privilege within its

borders ? Yet, even then, though the apparently *natural inconsistency*, to speak after the manner of men, would have been avoided, of descending from Abraham, with the intention of *extirpating the very root of Abrahamic blessings*, in regard to the least offending of mankind, *still it would not have prevented the obvious and appalling fact from being observed by all men, that with regard to himself, as the God of Abraham, there had been a complete turn about of mind*, in respect to the thoughts of his heart, and his purposes towards our infant race. *Now if Christ can change thus as to infants, who can trust in him with any certainty or comfort for his own personal salvation ?*

But the indissoluble oneness of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, in all things essentially spiritual and holy, is nowhere more strikingly exhibited than in that very portion of God's word which demonstrates the *temporary* nature of all that was merely ceremonial ; we mean Saint Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. In that Epistle Moses furnishes the phraseology to Paul, by whose spiritual exposition and application of the things recorded concerning the Jewish Church, we gain the richest thoughts and conceptions of whatever relates to the priesthood of Christ, and all the glorious privileges of faith and holiness belonging to the Christian Dispensation. But had Paul served Moses and his economy as our Baptist brethren have served Abraham and his covenant, *he would have had nothing to do with him*, but would have refused him the honor of recognizing his law as containing even "a shadow of good things to come ;" Heb. x. 1. For Abraham's circumcising of Isaac is not allowed by the Baptists to be so much as the shadow of

spiritual blessings to our children ; *it was a something by itself*, that passed away with the end of the Mosaic economy, and had no reference to any thing similar that was to succeed under the Gospel of Christ. Now, such a declaration has this further difficulty in it, that, according to this view, the law of circumcision was *an anomaly, an irregularity*, one might almost say *an excrescence*, and a *blemish*, even in the law of Moses itself. For whereas *every thing else*, whether ablutions, offerings, sacrifices, tabernacle, temple, altar, priests, &c. *had an ulterior reference* to something better yet to come in a subsequent age, *this institution had no such reference*, but was incorporated with a general typical system *without having any correspondence or agreement with that system* ; and moved along with it to the end thereof, and then died away without having any counterpart to it in the latter ages of the world. And this anomaly will be rendered still more anomalous, by reflecting on the correspondence instituted, and from the beginning designed, between the Jewish Feast of the Passover, and the Christian Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. For then it will appear that *one Christian ordinance had a standing type, previously existing for ages*, so that when Christ came to be the true paschal lamb, the paschal ordinance was gradually, and in the end permanently, substituted for the Christian feast ; while the *initiatory Christian ordinance of Baptism had nothing under the law which pre-signified it*, and to which it hath succeeded ; and thus the Christian Sacraments themselves are in this respect as much at variance, as to their origin, as the ritual of circumcision is itself at variance with the spirit and object of the Mosaic economy.—All these conse-

quences do naturally and unavoidably result from an effort to sweep away at a stroke the moral bearing of the argument in favor of Infant Baptism drawn from the divinely appointed law of circumcision, first given to Abraham, and afterwards continued to his posterity.

But we are here met by our Baptist brethren with a *remark*, which they conceive to be *an argument*, and which they often bring forward, as containing much of the strength of their cause. We will put the argument in shape, as nearly after their own manner of representing it as possible.—Abraham, say they, was *commanded* to circumcise his posterity; but we are *not commanded* to baptize infants. Moreover, the Apostles *were commanded first to teach, and then baptize* all nations; which of course implies that only those should be baptized who had been previously taught, and become believers in Christ, of both which infants are incapable. And, in following out these instructions, we have recorded in the New Testament, many instances of adult baptism, but none of the baptism of infants. These things, unitedly considered, render it evident, that none but adults, or at least *believers*, at whatever age they may become such, are fit subjects to be received by baptism into the Christian Church.—Now this impartial statement, as we take it to be, of our brethren's reasons for opposing Infant Baptism, and adhering to their own sentiments, embraces three particulars;—the want of command—the Apostolic commission—and the practice of the Apostles, as ascertained from the examples written in the New Testament. The second branch of this argument, founded on our Lord's commission to the Apostles in Mark xvi. 15, 16, has been anticipated, and has been

sufficiently noticed in a former page, to which the reader is referred to prevent repetition. The other branches of it will be, we trust, satisfactorily answered in the succeeding sections of this chapter.

SECTION II.

The absence of a divine command to baptize Infants considered.

It is admitted that touching the baptism of infants we have not received an express commandment from the Lord. It is not indeed said in so many words, Let infants be baptized. But neither is it written, Refuse them baptism; for there is nothing formally stated on either side of the question. Looking at the subject therefore abstractedly, and apart from all collateral considerations, the utmost that can be allowed with regard to this objection is, that it is at best but *a negative argument*, and so it cannot be by any means, standing alone, admitted as conclusive. For that kind of argument, more than any other, requires to be managed with discretion and sobriety of mind; for to it may be very properly opposed *a counter negation*, of equal force and weight, by means of which a reflecting mind will be brought into a state of equilibrium, and look for something additional to conduct it to a satisfactory decision, as to the real path of Christian duty. Thus, if it be affirmed ever so strenuously, God hath not *commanded* the baptism of infants, it may with equal firmness be maintained, neither hath God *forbidden* the baptism of infants. If therefore our Baptist brethren choose to say, We will not bring our infants

to be baptized till God shall *enjoin* it ; we, on the other hand, may reply, But we will bring our infants, and present them to Christ in this his holy ordinance, till he shall *prohibit* it. Thus far, in mere abstract reasoning from the want of a positive command, question is opposed to question, and opinion to opinion, so that nothing can be decided on either side, as to which party acts in the most consistent and scriptural manner.

Now the impossibility of arriving at the truth at all, on this narrow and limited mode of argumentation, must convince us that, for that very reason, it is not legitimate. It is first laying down a position of a very doubtful character, and then judging of a controverted subject according to its agreement or disagreement with that position, rather than by making a faithful appeal to the sense and bearing of Holy Scripture, from thence to gather the mind and will of God. Thus in the case now under review. The position assumed on the one side is, that what is not expressly commanded *ought not* to be done ; and on the other side, that what is not expressly prohibited *may* be done : whereas there are many things *included* in the spirit and tenor of the divine commands and prohibitions, and in the scriptures of truth in general, according to the comprehensiveness of their import, which are not mentioned in a particular or positive manner. We are not then to judge of Christianity, either as to its principles, privileges, or duties, *by piece meal*, looking at this or that particular thing by itself ; but, as becometh those who have “ with them the Urim and Thummim of the Holy One ;” Dent. xxxiii. 8 ; “ an unction, whereby they know all things ;” 1 John ii. 20 ; we are to take a comprehensive view of the whole, and from thence to

collect, where it is not verbally declared, what is the pure and perfect will of God. *Christianity hath its constitution, as well as its laws*; and a good acquaintance with the former is often requisite to a sound and correct understanding of the latter. And from many concurring sources of evidence it appears that the following axiom, which hath been already in part illustrated, is agreeable to the genius and constitution of Christianity, namely, *That a principle once recognized in the Holy Scriptures as good and acceptable to God, must be for ever good and acceptable to him.* For though rites and ceremonies may change, *principles never alter*; good principles, like the good God, are the same “yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” Heb. xiii. 8. Now, one of those good principles is the dedication of infants to God in a holy and religious ordinance; wherefore that principle changeth not, but remaineth the same for all ages.

Now, by the help of a conclusion so sound and just, so safe and scriptural, if Moses and all the prophets wrote and spoke of “things concerning” Christ, and if Abraham himself rejoiced to see his day, and was glad,” Luke xxiv. 27, John viii. 56, without having his rapturous joy diminished *by the suspicion that in Messiah’s day the covenant promise would fail his seed*,—we may easily arrive at a knowledge of the truth. For, when we come to connect the argument, which we have represented as being evenly balanced, *with the entire subject, scope, and range of Divine Revelation*, in God’s gracious economy for the redemption and salvation of mankind, then we can *satisfactorily account* for the absence of a divine command on this particular point, and easily gather a knowledge of God’s will with regard to us, as the heads of

families, and our infant offspring whom he hath graciously given unto us. So far this general answer must suffice. Increasing light will break in upon our mind as we proceed; from whence it will appear, that though of necessity the earliest Ministers baptized adults *in the beginning*, and so it is in no wise remarkable that to them the individual instances of baptism specified in the New Testament should especially refer;—yet the conclusion that *none but they* were in that age baptized doth not at all follow as a consequence from that unquestioned fact; but on the contrary, *certain other facts, collateral with it, and arising out of it, or fairly connected with it*, do undeniably prove, and satisfactorily establish, the opinion, that Infant Baptism, *as following in the train of Adult Baptism*, is sanctioned by the whole tenor of the New Testament writings, and by the spirit and examples which are recorded in its sacred pages. A few of these collateral facts will be elucidated in the sections following:—and the result of the examination will be that our Baptist brethren *set fact against fact*, as we have shewn already they make dispensation war against dispensation; whereas they who hold Infant Baptism, harmonize fact with fact, as well as dispensation with dispensation; and by “comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” 1 Cor. ii. 13, bring forth one uniform and consistent view of God’s grace and mercy towards our fallen and redeemed world. Our Baptist brethren exhibit only one half of the bow of the covenant as it arose in a former age, and stretched forward in all its brilliancy till it reached the Christian era, when, all at once, the opposite extremity of it became shrouded with a gloom that at least partially dimmed its beautiful lustre,

—some of its milder rays were gone ;—but we exhibit the same bow, as a perfect arch, *stretching from Eden to the end of time*, still bright with rays of undiminished glory, and *as much now as formerly* the token of the covenant, no less to the infant of an hour than to the hoary head of him who has seen a century of years, or lived down to the fourth generation. Our facts may possibly lead us into topics before touched upon, yet with new modes of illustration, and drawn from other Scriptures, giving thereby confirmation and solidity to the whole theme.

SECTION III.

Christianity is the perfection of Divine Revelation.

It is a fact too obvious to be denied, that Christianity was not intend to *destroy*, but to *perfect*, what was excellent in any preceding dispensation of grace to man. It might go far beyond in graciousness, but could not be less benign and merciful. It is in this very point that the gospel excels the law, as is most beautifully and convincingly set forth by Saint Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians. “But if the ministration of death,” saith he “written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance ; which glory was to be done away : How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious ? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the

glory that excelleth. For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." 2 Cor. iii. 7—11. Now, as in the beginning, infants were included in that original covenant of grace which God made with man in Eden, Gen. iii. 15, and *were never shut out of it afterwards*, but embraced therein, till the calling of Abraham, when they were, *by an express clause*, equally assured of their interest in it with Abraham himself, and so were recognized as "children of the covenant" so long as the law lasted, shall we suppose that soon as Christ came, who was himself the Mediator of that very covenant in which they had all along had a part, *they were disinherited?* Yea, *disinherited by his coming, and in consequence of his coming*, since, *if he had not then appeared*, their ancient rights and privileges would have been perpetuated to still remoter generations? Must we believe, that, *as soon as he was a babe in Bethlehem, all other babes ceased to stand in the relation which had hitherto subsisted between them and God?* That, as soon as he became *by birth* entitled to an acknowledged membership in the church, he closed the doors of the church against all afterwards born of women, during the tender years of infancy? Or, at least, that then began a new era in the providential and gracious economy of God, which, in the course of one or two generations, when the Jewish dispersion was accomplished, should lead to such a result? Are we then so overwhelmed with the mass of evidence against Infant Baptism as to be compelled to believe, that, when angels sung the heavenly anthem in the skies, midway between heaven and earth, that the song might reverberate through both worlds at once—"Glory to God

in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," Luke ii. 14, *there was a withdrawal of "good will" from infants*, the least guilty of the human race, who had never voluntarily offended, or "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Rom. v. 14. *Why then did not the angels sing an intelligible song? Did they mean to deceive the world?* Is this one of the methods in which *grace doth "much more abound"* than sin? Rom. v. 20. And yet, they who hold such opinions are inclined, on some occasions, to make rather large boastings of what they call the doctrines of grace, free grace, as though they pre-eminently, and above all others, and especially above Arminians, had a knowledge of the grace of God!!! *Tell us then, Is this grace also?* Surely nothing but an absolute declaration, announcing the future deprivation of infants of their long accustomed *gracious rights*, should induce us to believe that so *strange and unaccountable a contradiction* to the great designs of God in sending his Son Jesus Christ could have existence, in connection with his manifestation amongst the sons of men, as "the only begotten of the Father, *full of grace and truth*," John i. 14. But how "*full of grace*," if infants were rejected? For then there would have been *room for more grace* than was in him, since it took them not in, and so he was *not full*. And how "*full of truth*," if the promise "In thee shall *all families* of the earth be blessed," Gen. xii. 3, was limited by him *to adults* who are *but a part* of families? Let him that can, give a plain answer to these queries.

Moreover, the opinion held by our Baptist brethren seems to be *point blank against this scripture*:—"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the

world, but that the world through him might be saved ;” John iii. 17. For, according to their opinion,—*although they do not say it in so many words*, and would probably shrink from the assertion ; and will, it may be, censure us for bringing against them *what they will deem a false accusation* ; yet it is neither false accusation nor railing, but sober truth, stated with honest simplicity ;—according to their opinion, *the naked and unvarnished fact is undeniable*, that God *did* send his Son *virtually to condemn* poor helpless infants, *as unfit subjects for membership in his future Church*. And, *in this respect, he condemned them in the mass*, without any exception or distinction ; not for that “ they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil ;” John iii. 19 ; for they had not as yet committed one evil deed ; nor yet for any assignable reason whatever, such as that infants after the introduction of Christianity *were in any different moral condition by nature, than infants who were born before Christ came, but merely because God would have it so to be ?* Was there ever such a sweeping sentence of excommunication as this, pronounced against mankind, in the very worst days of Papal Rome ? And is this Protestantism ? Is this Christianity ? Thank God it is not Wesleyan Methodism ; for our eyes never beheld any such decree of reprobation from the visible church registered against infants in the book of God, nor any statements from whence such a dogma might be inferred. We are certain it is not found in these words of inimitable tenderness which proceeded from the lips of the Son of God :—“ Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God ;” Mark x. 14. Were it so, the Apostle, in the scripture

before quoted from the Corinthians, ought in all honesty to have stated the fact in the most distinct and explicit manner. While pourtraying the *general* superiority of the gospel over the law, and extolling the excellency of the Christian scheme, *he ought to have paused, and made the faithful concession, that in one point the law excelled in glory ;* and that it was *not in a small matter, but in a point that actually affected every human being coming into the world ;—that while the gospel was more glorious for adults, the law had the greater glory for infants.* Seeing, according to the opinions of those who are for Adult Baptism only, this is really and undeniably fact, Saint Paul should have admitted it, and not gone on to mislead his readers and the Christian Church of all ages, by affirming *as an universal* proposition, that which is *not universal*, but only *partial* and *limited*. Why did the Apostle put the matter in the very strongest light? Was it necessary that he should *rob* the law of its *just* glory *in order* that he might the *more artificially exalt* the gospel?—But now, for argument's sake, suppose the Apostle *had made* the admission which the tenets of those who oppose Infant Baptism require that he should have made, *what an awkward predicament the Apostle would have been in !* For, in working out the concession, he would have found it extremely difficult *to manage his own phraseology*, as contained in those singular expressions,—“the ministration of condemnation,” and “the ministration of righteousness ;” 2 Cor. iii. 9. For, in opposition to that very striking and impressive phraseology, he would have had to shew, that “the ministration of condemnation,” did not, in one sense, *condemn at all*, but that, by virtue of its association with sacrifice, it

allowed, on behalf of infants, an enrolment amongst the living in Jerusalem, in consequence of "the justification unto life which came upon all men;" Rom. v. 18; while, on the contrary, "the ministration of *righteousness*," under the immediate administration of him by whom that justification unto life came upon all men, *knew nothing of righteousness*, or justification *at all* with regard to infants; *but clean condemned them altogether*; and thus, in regard to infants, the gospel and the law *would actually interchange places*, while the most absolute terms, as descriptive of each economy, would be still retained, in opposition to justice and the truth of facts!! He who perceives these consequences, and still holds fast tenets leading to them, exposes himself to the danger of being tempted to question the inspiration of the sacred writings in general, and of Saint Paul, in this portion of those writings, in particular. But on the other hand, a comprehensive and consistent view of the entire economy of God's grace, and a conviction that in the brightest manifestations of his love in the gift of Christ, there could not possibly be any withdrawal of his ancient favor to our infant race, must lead the soul to exult in the Apostle's divine testimony, and in the assurance that *in this respect also*, the evanescent glory of the law had no glory when compared with the permanent glory that remaineth to the end of time in the gospel of God our Saviour. We may easily conceive of the *enlargement of infants' privileges*; so that whereas under the law every *male* child only was *formally* dedicated to God, females being accepted, at what time an outward offering was presented, without the same formality, and yet, not without a humiliating reference to the *inferiority* of the sex;" Lev. xii.

this token of subjection, after the Son of God "had been made of a woman," Gal. iv. 4, should be swept away, so that under the gospel dispensation there should be "neither male nor female," but all should be "one in Christ Jesus;" Gal. iii. 28. Herein again "the ministration of righteousness doth exceed in glory."

Looking then at the entire system of Christianity,—at its connection with the former dispensations of mercy, and at its superiority over them,—we see *no need* of a positive *command* for Infant Baptism, because *the principle* of infant dedication to God *naturally passed from the Jewish to the Christian Church*: but we do feel a conviction that if the principle were to have *been abolished*, and the gracious practice *abrogated*, *there would have been great need of a positive prohibition*; and moreover, some degree of light would have been required, *as to the reason thereof*, to enable mankind to have some faint conception of the cause of so mysterious and perplexing an anomaly in the redemption of the world by the incarnation and death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Forasmuch as it pleased God very plainly to declare that sacrifices and burnt offerings were to cease, it was necessary that he should have declared that infants' privileges were to cease also, if they had been amongst the things that were to pass away; but it was not necessary specifically *to enact their continuance*, any more than it was *to renew the fourth commandment*: both are confirmed by the general testimony of Christ:—"Think not that I am come *to destroy* the law, or the prophets: I am not come *to destroy*, but *to fulfil*;" Matt. v. 17.

SECTION IV.

The first Christians were Jews.

Another Fact we shall do well thoroughly to consider is, that the first Christians were of Jewish origin ; for it has an intimate relation to the subject of which we are treating, and to the foregoing observations on the comparative glory of the gospel and the law. As Christ “was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ;” Rom. i. 3 ; so his personal ministry was confined within the limits of Judea. “I am not sent,” said he, “but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel ;” Matt. xv. 24. “Jesus Christ,” saith Saint Paul, “was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God ;” but he adds the gracious design thereof in the words immediately following, —“*to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy ; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles ; and laud him, all ye people ;*” Rom. xv. 8—11. Now “the promises made unto the fathers,” as before shewn (see especially the remarks on Galatians iii., in a former page,) *belonged to their children also ;* and these promises St. Paul assures us in this passage Jesus Christ did not take away, *but “confirm.”* He *confirmed* them in their entire scope, and range, and fullest extent, without in the least *mutilating, or abridging, or altering,* them. For if not one jot or tittle of the law could fail, so neither could one jot or tittle of the promises fail ; for that were contrary to

another scripture which saith “For *all* the promises of God *in him* are *yea*, and *in him Amen*, unto the glory of God by us ;” 2 Cor. i. 20. And again, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever ;” Heb. xiii. 8.—Now, as Jesus Christ was the God of Abraham, and accepted *in the promise* Abraham’s seed, if he accept not our infants under the Christian dispensation, *he is not the same to-day that he was yesterday* ; he was one God to the Jews, and is another God to the Gentiles, which is altogether contrary to the Apostle’s testimony, in the above-cited scripture from his Epistle to the Romans. For after that he had said, “Jesus Christ was the minister of the circumcision,” &c. he adds, “*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy ;*”—and he quotes from Esaias, who saith, “There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles ; in him shall the Gentiles trust ;” Rom. xv. 12. Now, from all this it appears, that, *in whatever manner* “the promises were confirmed to the fathers,” *in the same manner* they were regarded as being confirmed to the Gentiles, now called to be with them *equally*, and *in all respects*, partakers of his mercy. Wherefore, *the seed of the Gentiles, as well as the seed of Abraham, were to be gathered into the Church of Christ*. And hence their rejoicing was to be *mutual*, as the causes of it were perfectly concurring :—“Rejoice, *ye Gentiles, with his people* : Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles ; and laud him, all ye people.” But, if the children of the Gentiles were to be shut out, and the adult race only to be taken into the church, there could have been no harmony in the praise, no common fellowship in the rejoicing, but a cause of envy and discontent introduced on the one

hand, and of vain glory and pride on the other. And yet it is certain, there is nothing the Apostle more earnestly labours to maintain than this, namely, "That the Gentiles were to be *fellow-heirs*--without any mark of inferiority, or alteration in the terms of the original title deed--"and of *the same body*,"--not of a *new* body, wholly different in its constitution and privileges;--"and *partakers*"--joint partakers "of *his promise in Christ*,--the *same ancient promise*, now finally established "in Christ by the gospel;" Ephes. iii. 6. See the whole of his Epistles to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Colossians. But this could not possibly have been accomplished without an extension of the same privileges to the posterity of the believing Gentiles which had been granted to the posterity of Abraham in former ages and generations. So then we conclude, that the changing of the rite of circumcision to baptism, *was never intended to lessen the privileges of the Gentiles*; but that *they and theirs*, without circumcision, were to become on equal terms, "fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God;" Ephes. iii. 19.

In further elucidation of the same series of gospel truths, let us reflect for a moment on the constitution of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem. They were all Jews or Jewish proselytes; and on them the Spirit was poured out from on high, while Peter and the rest of the Apostles were preaching on the day of Pentecost. Three thousand were converted at one time, which was a literal fulfilment of that ancient promise, to be hereafter still more illustriously accomplished,—"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation;" Isaiah lx. 22. At first their awakened souls were in deep

distress ; but subsequently their “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ was great, when they had received the atonement ;” Rom. v. 11. For “continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people ;” Acts ii. 46, 47.

But now, ponder over one thought. If no essential change as to principles were to take place between the constitution of the Jewish and Christian Churches, the entire silence of the Apostles in regard to such matters is easily accounted for ; *they need not command what was understood to be already commanded* : but if so vast and essential a change, as the refusal of Infant Baptism supposeth, was to be *the future law* of the Church of Christ, *now was the proper time and season for announcing it*, that the whole matter might be understood and acknowledged from the beginning. This would have been the more necessary as the first Christians were Jews, *whose religious training would give their mind, according to the opinions of Baptists, a completely wrong bias as to baptism*. Were the Apostles ignorant of the matter ? If they knew it, why did they not publish it ? Did they *cajole* their converts into the reception and profession of Christianity, *concealing from them at the same time an unpalatable doctrine, that would have overwhelmed them with amazement* ? For our Baptist brethren, in their zeal, represent us *as being in very grievous error*, insomuch that no small portion of their ministerial and religious efforts are expended about this one theme, Baptism,—as though the millennium could never arrive unless they made Baptists of us all ; (and

yet if they were to succeed, according to their sentiments, *the millennium, instead of continuing a thousand years, could not last a day*, for multitudes of *young heathens* would still keep pouring into our world, now filled with fruitful parents;) wherefore, if the matter be of so much consequence as they judge it to be, it were but reasonable that some *little portion of Apostolic teaching* should have been employed to *correct the established errors* of these *first converts in the day of their conversion to God*. If the Apostles had been right, sound, staunch Baptist Preachers, they ought in all sincerity and honesty to have made some such announcement as the following. “Ye men of Israel, hear this important declaration, and be this known unto you, all ye men of Judea: a new era has begun, from this the day of your espousals to Christ as his chosen, and your religious condition is wholly different from any thing you, or your fathers heretofore have known. It doth not so much relate to yourselves as your families. All your children that have been heretofore born and circumcised are children of the covenant, by virtue of the sign and seal of circumcision in their flesh. But all your children that may hereafter be born, now that you have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, shall, *in consequence of your becoming Christian believers, be shut out of God’s covenant*. Know therefore, that your future infants shall not belong to either the Jewish or Christian Churches; but be cast out into the world, pure, naked Gentiles or heathens, till they shall come to years of maturity, when they must choose for themselves, *as persons having no covenant obligations binding on them*, whether or not they will voluntarily become the disciples of that Saviour in whom you

believe for salvation !”—We say again, that some such announcement was absolutely necessary to lay the axe at the root of Infant Baptism, and prevent so pernicious an error from springing up, as it were insensibly, and establishing itself firmly under the very shadow of the cross, considering the gradual manner in which Christianity spread from Jerusalem and Judea throughout the Gentile world.

But now, who can conceive what an extraordinary effect such a strange doctrine as this would have produced on three thousand fathers of Jewish families ! And that at the very time when their spiritual enjoyments were of the purest and most perfect kind, and consequently they would have valued whatever of church 'privileges had belonged to them and their households more intensely than ever, and would have clung to them with a most irrepressible ardour ! How would such news have damped their holy joy ! What a gloom would it have spread over their countenances ! This gospel would have hardly seemed gospel to them ! And instead of “praising God” continually, what a cry would have gone up to heaven ; O that our Ishmaels might live before thee ! And what efforts would they not have made to get the dire decree if possible revoked on behalf of their future generations ! For by such a decree, or act of disinheriting, would their unborn children be *punished*, not only without any sin of their own, or any sin of their fathers ; but actually the children would be punished, and the fathers along with them, *for obedience to God*, who had commanded them by Peter to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ !—What a farrago of inconsistencies have we here ! We see now what the refusal of Infant

Baptism comes to. It equally, however unintentionally, dishonors the Holy Ghost and the Son of God. For according to this most uncomfortable, unfatherlike notion, it makes the cessation of infant privileges *to begin with the birth of Christ, and to be completed on the day of Pentecost!!*

And was it indeed to establish *such* a doctrine that the Spirit was poured out from on high on that illustrious day? Was the Apostle Peter divinely led to select for his text, on that most memorable occasion, the wonderful prophecy of Joel, which foretold amongst other things this blessed truth,—“your *sons* and your *daughters* shall prophesy,” *that in the course of his sermon he might prove sons and daughters were about to be cut off in the lump*, as though the prophet’s words contained *more of irony than gracious truth* to cheer the hearts of the sons of men? Can we catch even a glimpse of such a doctrine from any part of Peter’s exposition, or from any shade of expression that fell from his lips, now touched with hallowed fire? Nay, verily not; but, as it were, for ever to prevent its successful establishment on the ground of divine authority, whatever errors good men might fall into on this subject from partial views of divine truth, he cried aloud in the audience of all the people, immediately after he had exhorted them to personal repentance and to baptism, saying, “For the promise is unto you, *and to your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call;” Acts ii. 39.—Now, how would Jews, thus circumstanced, and wholly ignorant of what is now called the Baptist controversy, understand that clause,—“you, *and your children*?” Here is no limitation of age; most assuredly

therefore, as Jews, they would take the words in their largest sense, as comprehending every soul in their families, as well the suckling as the child of sufficient age to discern between good and evil. And if "*the promise*" *belonged unto them, so also did the sign and seal thereof*; which was an encouragement to them to receive Christian Baptism, and an additional source of gladness in that happy day, when, by the might of the Spirit of the Lord, their hearts were turned to a true faith in Christ, and the reception of salvation through his name. But, with the same breath, the Apostle adds,—"*and to all that are afar off*;" which expression, "*afar off*," *particularly denotes the Gentile nations*; for thus the Apostle writes to the Gentile believers at Ephesus,—"*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ*;" Ephes. ii. 13. "*To all*" of them, according to Peter, the *same* promise belongs, *and in the same sense as to the Jews*: (for there were not two gospels, but one gospel containing "*glad tidings of great joy for all people*;) and lest there should be any doubt, as to the extent of his meaning, he concludes with that comprehensive and emphatic clause, "*even as many as the Lord our God shall call*;" which takes in all ages and nations of mankind:—Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and all the islands of the seas;—Jews and Gentiles to the very ends of the earth, and to the end of time. Now, a *covenant promise*,—*and that is the precise character of every promise of the gospel*,—*cannot be dissociated from the sign and seal of the covenant*; *whosoever hath the one, is, by that very circumstance, assuredly entitled to the other*. Wherefore if on the day of Pentecost "*the promise*" were equally

confirmed to the Jews and to their children; and to the Gentiles to the utmost bounds of the earth, and to their children;—then, the children of each, whether of Jews or Gentiles, are equally entitled to be received by that initiatory ordinance, which Christ hath ordained as “the sign and seal” of that promise, into the visible church of the one only true and living God.

As a branch of the argument in favor of Infant Baptism, drawn from the fact that the first Christian Church was composed of Jews, and from the history of its origin and establishment, we may adduce the controversies which subsequently arose between many of the Jewish and Gentile believers, concerning the extension of the law of circumcision to all the Gentile Christians. This was a most critical subject, the relative position of the several contending parties considered; and one which required the united counsels and deliberation of the Apostles to settle: see Acts xv. The providence of God took care beforehand to prepare the way for its settlement, by the previous conversion of Cornelius; and, in an eminent manner, he guided his apostles by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to bring the debates to a sober, catholic, and safe practical decision. But, in all these debates, *there is no reference to infants by either party*; the contention was simply about the Gentiles, whom certain Jewish zealots would have to be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses. Now, had it been the case, that at the very time the Apostles declared the Gentiles to be free from the yoke of circumcision, *they also refused baptism to the children of the believing Gentiles*, what an air of triumph would the Jewish brethren have assumed over their Gentile brethren? With what a

powerful argument would they have been furnished in favor of their judaizing schemes? "Our children are of the church, your's are not." *And who could have gainsayed or resisted it?* Not all the authority of the Apostles could have put down the influence of such an astounding appeal to matter of fact. But, forasmuch as we hear of no such glorying of the Jews over the Gentiles, nor of the least allusion to any occasion for it, nor meet in all the New Testament writings with any reference to *a sort of half-caste race*, for whose souls some apostolic and pastoral care must have been required, since they must have been very numerous even in the course of that generation, we can only conclude that such circumstances had no being, and such a race no existence, because the Church of Christ in receiving the parents, received their children also, and welcomed the sons with the fathers within her pale, that they might together share in her free and eternal blessings.

Here then we have evidence sufficient in favour of Infant Baptism. *Seeing it is secured to us by the rich Pentecostal Promise ;—by the Law and the Gospel, in their fulness of purity, spirituality, power, and mercy conjoined ;—by Joel and by Peter, and by the Lord, the Spirit, what need have we to inquire for what is called a positive command ?* If the practice were not right, it must have needs been *forbidden* ; but the *principle* having been long established, nothing more was requisite to incorporate it with Christianity, *as a part and parcel of its constitution, than to legalize it by a promise* ; which hath been done in the most full and effectual manner by the Spirit of the Lord : see here and compare together again Acts ii. 37, 39, and Rom. xv. 4,

13. And whoever seeks to undo what God hath done, however well meant his endeavours, and however pure his intentions may be, will find himself pretty much in the predicament of Balaam when he said, "Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it:" Numb. xxiii. 20. God hath commanded all his ministers to bless infants in his name, and blessed they shall be; for in promising blessing to them, Christ *hath virtually said*, "In these ordinances of my church let all the families of the earth be blessed." Who then, or what is he, who would sink christianity in respect to infants, not only below Judaism, but even below Mohammedanism, or heathenism? Even pagans are fond of tabooing their children, or imprinting on their forehead some mark of veneration for their idols; and a Turk looks upon his child as a young disciple of Mahomet; and the Jew has ever circumcised his children according to the law; *must Christians be the only race who cast away their offspring?* Or shall they, as becomes the professors of the now only pure religion, which excels in universal benevolence, come forward, and give their infants, in the holy ordinance of Baptism, to Jesus Christ, whom they rejoice to acknowledge as their Lord, and their God?

SECTION V.

The Christian Religion is a Family Religion.

Interwoven with the fact treated of in the preceding section, and yet so distinct from it as to merit special elucidation, we meet with another fact, concerning *the*

family character of the religion of Christ. The Christian religion is pre-eminently calculated to promote the advantage of families, and is designed to secure and transmit a permanency of family benefits. That it often fails of accomplishing this great end, through the unfaithfulness of man, and the perverseness of human nature, is admitted ; but that admission in no wise weakens the fact that such is in reality the true constitution of the Christian economy, and the gracious design of God in its establishment in the earth. A remnant only of Israel of old were saved, although God “ had formed that people for himself, that they might shew forth his praise :” Isa. xliii. 21. Let us see how this truly noble and convincing evidence of the divine origin of the Christian religion may be established from the testimony of the word of God. *It is a continued class of evidence, that goes hand in hand with Infant Baptism*, but is sadly beclouded, or rather one might say, wholly lost, or thrown away, by those who adhere to the tenets of the Baptist persuasion.

First of all, then, let it be observed that *ancient promises* expressly declare that this should be characteristic of Messiah’s reign. “ And in thee” said God to Abram, “ shall *all families* of the earth be blessed :” Gen. xii. 3. The same promise was renewed to Jacob ;—“ and in thee and in thy seed shall *all the families* of the earth be blessed :” Gen. xxviii. 14. And these promises were rather universal than national, and belonged more to the times of the gospel than to the patriarchal and prophetic ages. For so Saint Paul interprets them. “ Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many ; but as of one, and

to thy seed, *which is Christ:*" Gal. iii. 16. Wherefore Jesus Christ came into the world to be *the Saviour and blessing of families*; and the promises established in and with him, are *family promises, and not belonging to the parents only*; which undoubted fact leads us to repeat the remark before made, *and which our Baptist brethren can neither answer nor set aside*,—no man can refute it—namely, *that the covenant promise cannot be dissociated from the sign and seal of the covenant; so that whosoever hath the one is by that very circumstance assuredly entitled to the other.*

Moses hath settled the same point beyond all controversy in the fifth commandment of the law. "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee:" Exod. xx. 12. *But the commandment supposeth that children, to whom it is delivered, are already members of that church in which it is published*, and thereby both brought under the jurisdiction of the law, and heirs of the promise made to those who obey it. And whereas Saint Paul hath both quoted the commandment, and commented on it, he hath satisfied us that this holy precept, and its promises, *stand on precisely the same footing in the Christian as in the Jewish church.* His words are these. "Children obey your parents *in the Lord*: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth:" Ephes. vi. 1, 3. Here the particular expression "in the Lord," that is in the *Lord Jesus*, (clearly so, see v. 5, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 32, and chap. vi. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,) *makes it a church precept, and*

consequently binding on children as members of the church. Now how could children have become members of the church if the Apostles never baptized children? *This inquiry is worth a few thoughts,* if our Baptist brethren would but take time and look at it, and not pass it by in a huff. The inquiry is the more forcible, as the Apostle is distinctly treating of relative duties, as *associated with, and illustrative of, church-membership and order.* Thus of marriage in the preceding chapter he says,—“*This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.* And indeed we cannot perceive how a Baptist parent can, *on Christian grounds,* require obedience from his children at all, because he and they are not in the same spiritual relation to God. Were he, for example, to quote to his child the words of the Apostle, the child might reply—“*Father, I am not yet in the Lord; wait till I have been baptized, and then I will submit as a Christian child ought to do, to your authority.*” And the child would unquestionably have the best of the argument; reason would lie altogether on his side, however much the light of the gospel, as known in a Christian land, might cause his conscience to condemn him for acts of disobedience to parental authority. But if the father would proceed merely *rationaly*, and according to the true genius and bearing of his own principles, he would have to deal with divine revelation as avowed infidels do, *and go back to the laws of nature, and natural obligations, &c.,* availing himself however, as infidels also avail themselves, of the splendor of the light of revealed truth, to expound and interpret the laws of natural religion, with a clearness and correctness far surpassing the knowledge of the most

favor of heathen nations. Let not our brethren wax warm, and be angry with us, and say we put them on a level with infidels: by no means; *we* are not doing it, but only shewing that, *in this one particular, they themselves do it for themselves*; which *we* cannot help; if *they will* do it they must, and abide by the consequences. By keeping their children back from Christian baptism, *they put them beyond the pale of Christian authority*; nor do we see how, *on strict Baptist principles*, any portion of either law or gospel can be justly applied to their posterity, excepting only such general passages as Rom. ii. 14, 15, which are applicable to all mankind. But in one thing we do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, that our Baptist brethren are not in reality infidels,—*we disclaim such imputation*,—nay verily, they are Christians, *and the genuine children of God*; and their churches are Christian churches; and we further rejoice in the knowledge, that *their piety is better than their principles*, and that though they will not, like us, sprinkle their children with the water of baptism, they will, as sincerely and as fervently as we, pray that their souls may be sprinkled with Jesus' precious blood, and renewed by the power of the divine and eternal Spirit of God. *Happy inconsistency!* They are, it seems, after all, *Pedo-Baptists also, in every thing save only the water*; they are anxious to secure for their children *the seal* of the covenant of grace, (else were they not Christians,) only they will not allow them *the sign*; which error, because of the integrity of their hearts, God in numberless instances forgives, and his blessing doth go down to their righteous posterity for many generations. The Lord bless them more and more; only we cannot

help wishing that they better understood their Christian duty.

If we go back to the origin of mankind, it will be found that the first promise was most emphatically *a family promise*. “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth upon the earth:” Gen. 1. 28. In substance the same blessing was renewed to the one pair, in the family relation, when the promise of a Saviour was given: Gen. iii. 15, only with this humiliating addition, befitting their altered circumstances by the fall;—“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children:” Gen. iii. 16. Hundreds of years afterwards the very same promise was renewed to Noah, the second father of the human race: Gen. ix. 7. The Psalmist plainly refers thereto, in psalm the eighth, and to the interest which even “babes and sucklings” have therein. And Saint Paul by applying it spiritually to Christ, Heb. ii. 6, 9, *appropriates the whole range of these family promises, and all others of a similar nature, with the family blessings entailed therein, to Christianity and the Christian age*. It is indeed wonderful to observe, throughout the scriptures, what notice God takes of mankind *as distributed into families*, and how he engages to bless them in that relation, especially when the head of the household is upright and godly. See Psalm cxxvii and cxxviii. He stiles himself “the God of all the families of Israel;” Jer. xxxi. 1; and he varies his goodness according to their need, and

every change in their condition. "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me:" Jer. xlix. 11. "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation:" Psalm lxviii. 5. *Now who would restrict these blessed promises to the Jewish age? Are they not the common inheritance of the Christian church also?* But how is it that the fatherless and widow are *classed together* in these gracious words, if the widow only is allowed to belong to the church, but the fatherless child—it may be a babe, an infant at the breast, is, nominally at least, appointed to be kept out of the church, and so what Saint Paul calls all such, a "stranger from the covenants of promise?" Ephes. ii. 12. How comes it to pass then that the child's name, equally with the mother's, is *actually enrolled in the same promise*; and that the dying father is exhorted by Jeremiah to leave him, equally with the widow, to the faithful care of *a covenant keeping God*? Surely the tender and hallowed association teacheth us that infants too are of his fold, and most tenderly cared for by the Great Shepherd; as it is written;—"He shall gather *the lambs* with his arm, and *carry them in his bosom*, and shall gently lead those that are with young:" Isaiah xl. 11. This last clause may be added for the peculiar comfort of those Christian widows who sustain the loss of the husband before the infant child is born; so gracious is God to families throughout the afflictions of this changing and mortal life. In perfect accordance therefore with the spirit, intent, and perpetuity of these, and such like promises, too numerous to be quoted, for they abound in every part of the book of God, Christ came to be *the blesser of families*, and to

make his religion, from the very outset of the Christian life, a *family religion*, that he might be the common hope of the fathers and the children, according to that devout prayer, "Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it:" Psalm xc. 16, 17.

In conformity to the sentiments now advanced, it is to be observed, that under the gospel of Christ, the original sacredness and holiness of the divine institution of marriage is carried out to the fullest perfection. See that extraordinary passage in Saint Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, which is too long to cite here entire, and which sets this matter in a strong and clear light: Ephes. v. 20, 33. Turn to your bibles and read it, before you proceed, however often you may have read it on former occasions. To secure the desirable result of family godliness, it was also enjoined that Christian believers should marry "only in the Lord:" 1 Cor. vii. 39. And again, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. And obedience to these holy commands is necessarily implied in that special family promise,—"*Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness with sobriety:*" 1 Tim. ii. 15. But now as the prophet enquireth, "*wherefore one?*" Wherefore, as in the beginning he made one godly pair, hath he restored by his law, and especially by Christ,

the marriage institution to all its original purity and spirituality? He answereth, "That he might seek *a godly seed*;" Mal. ii. 15; "a seed that should be accounted to the Lord for a generation:" Psalm xxii. 30. Not that the generation should be accounted the Lord's *at an odd end of their life, but from their birth*;—"a godly seed" throughout all their growth from infancy to youth and manhood; that like as the woman is "*saved in childbearing*," the child born, in gratitude for that salvation, as well as for other reasons, might "*as long as he liveth* be lent to the Lord:" 1 Sam. i. 28. If then Christianity truly perfects the social condition of mankind, and is the restorer of the breaches sin hath made in social happiness, she must be a mighty benefactress to infants, and transmit her whole economy, both institutions and benefits to them.

In the first age of the Christian Church, there was an irregularity, attended with many difficulties, of not unfrequent occurrence, and yet not easily admitting of remedy, on account of the stringent law of Christ with regard to marriage, whereby *separation was prohibited*, save only for the cause of fornication, or adultery: Matt. v. 32, and xix. 3—9. The case of some in the Corinthian church will illustrate this point, where only one of the parties united in marriage was a Christian, probably because the husband or the wife had been converted after their marriage union. Now, though the Apostle, in writing to that same church, positively forbade *the unmarried* from forming and entering into such a union, and condemned it in the strongest language as *utterly antichristian*; 2 Cor. vi. 14 to vii. 1; yet, where the union of opposite parties *actually existed*, the believer

was not required or allowed to put away the heathen husband or wife because of unbelief: 1 Cor. vii. 13. And so benign is Christianity in its influence on the family relation, that even in such a case, it considers the children entitled to privileges and benefits in consequence of their relation to a believing parent. "For," saith the Apostle "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; *else were your children unclean; but now are they holy:*" 1 Cor. vii. 14. The Apostle doth not mean *morally* holy, for that would be contrary to Psalm li. 5, and John iii. 6, and many other scriptures; but he means "holy" in a *relative* sense, by being brought into the church of Christ, and so separated from the pollutions of heathenism, that, having been in baptism, in this sense, "sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word," Ephes. v. 26, they might in future life, as those who were already novitiates, "be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord:" Ephes. v. 4. And this interpretation of the Apostle's words, very much corresponds with what he testified concerning Israel also, before their final rejection had taken place; "for if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the *root* be holy, so are the *branches:*" Rom. xi. 16. He had no notion of leaving the church *nothing but stumps, or bare roots, with all the branches lopped off as soon as they were born*; that was no more suited to the gospel with which he was entrusted, than to the law of Moses. And the manner in which these two scriptures, Rom. xi, 16, and 1 Cor. vii. 14, mutually explain one another, *conjoined with the difficulty which our Baptist brethren find of making any sense of them at all*, comes in aid of what hath been before stated con-

cerning baptism as an ordinance designed by God to succeed unto, and come in the place of, the ancient rite of circumcision. Under each dispensation the children were *relatively* holy and clean; which is one meaning of the word "sanctified," both in the Old and New Testament writings.

Moreover if we hold that Infant Baptism is unscriptural, then is the beautiful illustration and argument of the Apostle in the eleventh chapter of Romans, despoiled throughout of all its vigour and beauty. For he represents the Gentiles as being grafted on the stock of the ancient Jewish Church, of which Christ himself was the root; Isa. xi. 10, Rev. xxii. 16; *for the express purpose of having all its privileges and benefits conveyed through that church to them.* But, according to Baptist notions, they are scarcely engrafted, before the transmission of privilege fails, *even in the very next generation.* Alas! what value was there in this engrafting that the Apostle should so greatly extol it, unless provision had been made for *a succession of engraftings* of adults from generation to generation? Wherefore hath he spoken of *that one act* as though there were *a natural perpetuity* in it, that should extend to the end of time, even until Israel were grafted in again, unless *personal sinfulness and unbelief* should occasion a cutting off? Can any language be more explicit than the words of the Apostle in v. 17, 18, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted *in among them*, and *with them partakest* of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Here the words "in among them," and those other words "with

them partakest," imply *a perfect community* of rights and privileges, the natural branches having no rights or privileges whatsoever that were not equally shared and enjoyed by the engrafted branches. But how does this agree with the rejection of infants from the Christian Church when they had all along been regarded as members of the Jewish Church? Then were the Gentiles not grafted "in among" the Jewish believers, but shot up by themselves from altogether a new stock; neither were they "partakers *with them* of the root and fatness of the olive tree," but, separate from them, they sprung up from a stem never planted till the days of the Apostles! Then were the constitution of the two churches as opposite as light and darkness, the one embracing infants, and the other casting them away; so that in every city where the Christian Church was composed partly of Jewish and partly of Gentile believers, there must have been a perpetual occasion of collision between them on this very ground, instead of a motive for union, and for forbearance and kindness on the part of the Gentiles, as the Apostle here argueth! Yea, by maintaining such views, the Gentile believers, *would have put to shame the Apostle of the Gentiles, at the very time he was magnifying his office, to ensure unto them their full share of all the blessings of the gospel.* For he thus states his design, "I magnify mine office, if by any means I may *provoke to emulation them which are my flesh*, and might save some of them;" Rom. xi. 13, 14. But what sort of *emulation* would it have excited in the breast of the Jews to have been told that Christianity, in its ordinances and privileges, only belonged to adults, and was a divine system in which infants had no concern? That

the children of Gentile Christians had no more "part or lot in the matter," than the old heathen themselves had in the peculiar immunities of the Israel of God? Would such a doctrine have excited emulation in the Jews to embrace Christianity, as Paul desired, that they might be saved? Or, would it have fortified them in their attachment to Judaism, and their fatal unbelief, whereby they rejected Christ and his gospel? And shall we Gentiles, who are now saved, in these modern times, maintain tenets that would have put to shame our own Apostle, by whom the unsearchable riches of Christ were so extensively made known to the Gentile world? Ought we not to own the wisdom and goodness of God, and to set a high value on this providential and gracious engrafting, as for many other reasons, so also specially for this one reason, that our divine Lord himself, who was Jesse's root, Isaiah xi. 10, was, as to his human nature, "a rod of Jesse's stem, and a branch that grew out of his roots?" Isaiah xi. 1. And so whatever church privileges he had, *they were transmitted to him, as to every other Jew, in the way of natural inheritance*: wherefore when we Gentiles were "grafted in among" the Jewish believers, *he, they, and we, were all exactly alike as to our privileges*, and the perpetuity thereof became, if not better secured, yet rendered more illustrious and exalted, in the Christian, than in the Jewish Church of old. "In *all things*," saith the Apostle, "it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren;" Heb. ii. 17. But that saying hath a *restriction* in it, if Baptist opinions be the truth. For then he was *made like unto his Jewish brethren, by becoming a member of the Church of God in his infancy; but not like his Gentile brethren*, if they have no right

to membership till the age of infancy has passed away. But if indeed baptism in infancy succeed to circumcision, *then does the universal affirmation universally apply*, as well to the Gentiles as the Jews, *and we are all one in Christ Jesus*. And this is the true statement contained in the holy gospel, in which the church at large is regarded as but one family, Ephes. iii. 15, concerning whom St. Paul saith, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" Gal. iii. 26.

Now all these series of truths bring us to one and the same conclusion, namely, that the Christian religion is eminently a family religion. Its institutions, ordinances, services, ministrations, laws, promises, privileges, and blessings, have all an immediate bearing on the social and domestic happiness of mankind; and though calculated to bless individual man, they have a special adaptation to his *relative state*, primarily as the member of a family, and secondarily as the member of a community, of a nation, of the world. In this respect it is in no wise inferior to the patriarchal or the Jewish religion. Each dispensation partook of the same general character; which indeed well accords with the natural order of things, since, agreeably to the arrangement of divine providence, nations and empires are but communities of families; so that to establish religion in families is the most effectual way to spread it throughout the world. By this means, every one is set to work within his own sphere; and every one has a sphere to work in. *And the work being based on the relation, the duty begins as soon as the relation begins; and Christianity recognizes both as soon as the child is born.*

If then the Christian religion be so constituted by God's

grace and mercy as to be *a family religion, it cannot be* that when a child is brought forth, and becomes a member of the family, it should be refused the outward and visible sign of the initiatory ordinance of baptism, as a token and earnest of its right to, and interest in, all those promised family blessings which are given in Christ Jesus our Lord. Is Christianity the mother of family blessings, and shall not new-born babes suck of the breasts of her consolation? Hath she no tender mercies for them? Are they to be looked upon as “strangers from the covenants of promise;” Ephes. ii. 12; for many years to come; and by their own parents, in opposition to such designed benefits, be virtually constituted heathens? Or at best be but a mongrel race, the unbaptized posterity of a baptized ancestry, for whom no suitable designation can be found? Be merely *named* John, Thomas, or what not, and yet never have a *Christian name, which no one can give, even by a religious act or service, apart from Christ’s holy ordinance of baptism?* Nor have they any more right in manhood to the courtesy of being called Christians than the Turks of Constantinople, or the Hindoos or Chinese of the East. And though they may even be trained up to prayer, and an attendance on the outward worship of God, in the use of which means, God, graciously overlooking the errors of the parents, in this particular, and accepting and blessing their conscientious and pious endeavours to benefit their children, may communicate light and a degree of salvation, *yet are they, after all, in reality, in a heathen state, and do but worship as enlightened heathens;* so far as it regards their visible relation to God and his church. And, on the part of the parents, what is all this but the fruit of

unbelief. They consider it *doubtful* what their children may prove to be, and will wait till their own conduct evidences their personal fitness for a reception into the Church of Christ, instead of presenting their infants *in faith* to God, and humbly claiming in the very ordinance itself, his grace to convert, renew, and save their souls. Surely if the religion of Christ be so benign to families, *this one act must be most anti-Christian*; and prayers for a child, while we refuse it baptism, are but a pious contradiction between the affections and the desires of a holy heart, and the erring conceptions of a but partially enlightened understanding. When our Christian and beloved Baptist brethren, with so much commendable zeal, establish family worship, as though like some of old, they fain would have a church in their house, they do first of all, with extraordinary care, *build up a wall of partition*, behind which their little Gentiles may worship as Gentiles, until baptism lifts them over it, (if ever they be baptized,) and admits them to the same privilege of saying *equally* with their parents, “Our Father which art in heaven.” Alas! family worship is imperfect in its very first principles, where so much as one child is left unbaptized, as though it had no special share and interest in the covenant which God hath made in Christ, saying, “In thee shall all *the families* of the earth be blessed.”

SECTION VI.

The Apostles baptized households.

Since the holy religion of Jesus Christ is a divine institution for the benefit and salvation of families, it was

to be expected that its ministers should be anxious to convey its blessings to the entire households of those who received them in the Lord, or who embraced the message of reconciliation which they brought in his name. It would have hardly comported with the character of the gospel they were sent to proclaim, and would have been repugnant to the best feelings of their hearts, to have introduced the elder branches of the household into the Church of Christ, and to have left the younger as outcasts, for whom as yet no spiritual provision was made. For they must have remembered the words of the Lord Jesus, how that he said unto them in the beginning, "And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it;" Matt. x. 12, 13. The salutation of course would be given to the master of the house, as the head of the household; but the peace would come upon *all* the members of it, without the exception of an individual, unless any chose to except themselves. In that case, "a man's foes would be they of his own household;" Matt. x. 36; but the variance would be between *the adults* of a family, and not affect the infants or children; much less would Christianity create a wall of separation in a united family that agreed to receive the servants of the Lord, by prohibiting the infants from that ordinance which introduces them into the church, that they might share in its blessings and peace. The Apostles therefore acted according to the spirit of their earliest instructions, when in the course of their enlarged ministrations, they without hesitancy or doubt baptized entire households.

Of the broad fact itself there is no doubt between us and our Baptist brethren. But they maintain that we

have no clear example of Infant Baptism, for that in their opinion there were no infants in the families whose reception of the gospel is recorded; or if there were, the phraseology in one instance is such as to imply that *they* were *not* baptized. It is needful therefore to examine the scriptures referred to, which may be easily done, as there are but three passages bearing on the subject.

The first case is that of Lydia, whose brief history is thus recorded. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when *she was baptized*, and *her household*, she besought us saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us;" Acts xvi. 14, 15.—Here we have a beautiful exemplification of the instructions before quoted, "enquire who in the city is *worthy*," and one could almost imagine from Lydia's remark, "If ye have judged me to be *faithful*," she had gained some intimation of that rule, and employed it as her great argument to persuade Paul and Silas to "enter her house, and abide there." Be that as it may, she gave one evidence of her worthiness, or faithfulness, in that when she was baptized, "*her household*" were baptized;—it seems with her, at the same time, and on the same occasion. Now of what "*her household*" consisted,—whether of domestics only, or of domestics and children,—we have no means of ascertaining; nor of the number of either, or of both classes, comprehended in the general term. Only considering her occupation, her respectability, and her ability to entertain and support these servants of the Lord, one

might conclude that it were far more probable than not, that in such an establishment there were some children, either of her own, or of her servants ; and *if* so, then, that they were baptized also, because it is said without distinction, whether of age or sex, that they who constituted "her household" were baptized, when she embraced the gospel. If however this *probability* be not accepted as *proof*, in favor of Infant Baptism, it ought at least to *neutralise* our opposition to it, as being a matter up to this point, *undetermined* by scripture example, on which head we may hope to obtain further light as we proceed to examine the matter. Let this case then for the present lie over by mutual consent ; save only that we who hold Infant Baptism must maintain that the *probability*, collected from the entire circumstances connected with it, is in favor of our opinion.

The second case occurs in the same chapter, in the wonderful awakening and conversion of the Philippian jailer. In deep distress for sin, he brought Paul and Silas out of prison, "and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ; and was baptized, *he and all his*, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, *believing in God with all his house ;*" Acts xvi. 30—34. Now here also it is not clear, so as to make the matter certain and indisputable, whether or not there were children ; or if children, any who were infants or very young. The only fact put beyond doubt is, that *none of the family were exempted from baptism.*

But in this case, as in the former, *probability* comes in to favor the Christian doctrine, as we may call it, of Infant Baptism. For though children be not directly mentioned, any more than *the wife* of the jailer, yet the expressions "*he and all his*" must naturally apply to both wife and children, and would certainly be understood to mean them exclusively, or chiefly, if the narration were unconnected with baptism, and the disputes to which it has given rise. Since then it is pretty nearly certain that there were children, it is further highly probable that some of them were very young; because the jailer himself was in the vigour of life, and not advanced in age. This fact we collect from the office which he held, as "keeper of the prison." It was one of great responsibility and trust, there being subordinate officers under him, for the prison was very large, divided into many compartments, and the prisoners were many in number. For when the earthquake shook the prison, "immediately *all* the doors were opened,"—implying they were many,—"and *every one's* bands were loosed:" Acts xvi. 26.—A place of so great responsibility, and requiring vigilant inspection, would not be committed to a man past active service by an increase of years. The magistrates knew the fidelity and vigour of their officer, when they "charged him to keep Paul and Silas safely:" and he acted according to his known character, when he "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks;" v. 23, 24. Moreover, when he was suddenly awoke by the earthquake at the midnight hour, he was all agility and activity, for starting from "his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled." Every ex-

pression here denotes the vigorous officer, the active man in the prime of life. Hence the necessity of Paul's crying out with so much promptitude, "Do thyself no harm, for we are *all* here;" v. 28. Even then, in the midst of the awakenings of his guilty conscience, his official vigilance and activity did not forsake him:—"Then he *called for a light, and sprang in*, and came trembling," &c. v. 29. And his further activity is stated in v. 33,—"*And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes*," &c. Now all these observations when put together can scarcely fail to induce a conviction that the jailer was not a man himself advanced in years; from which circumstance we infer as highly probable that some of his children who were baptized with him were very young. The particular part of the sacred text which our Baptist brethren appeal to with so much confidence is contained in v. 34; "*and he rejoiced believing in God with all his house*;" from whence they infer that those who constituted his house were of age to understand and believe the word of salvation. The phrase however may mean no more than this, that they who were capable of believing in his family, did believe and rejoice as well as he; but without in the least intending to intimate, either that there were no infants, or young children, or that such little ones were excluded from baptism, and from all share in the blessings which came that night upon the converted jailer's family. It would surely have been rather puzzling to the Apostle to have ascertained, when he was going on with the baptism of the family, *at which child to stop*; nor could it have failed to damp the jailer's rejoicing, converted himself as by miracle from heathenism to Christianity, to have seen a fragment of the family, two or

three of the little ones *compelled to remain in heathenism still*, and kept out of the pale of the church, while he, so great an offender, was made a partaker of the mercy of the Lord. Now to get rid of such an embarrassing difficulty, our Baptist brethren wish us to receive, not the common-sense interpretation of v. 34, given above, but one that squares with their notions, and to suppose that "all" the jailer's "house" consisted of adults, in opposition to the strong internal probability of the history, which, as before expounded, leads to the contrary conclusion. If however this probability will not be admitted by our opponents—though we do not consent to give it up—we are willing that for the present it should lie over, and the duty of Infant Baptism be viewed as yet *undecided* by Apostolic example.

The third case is that mentioned by Saint Paul, in a casual way, in his Epistle to the Corinthians,. "And I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas;" 1 Cor. i. 16. Of them the Apostle writes again in the end of his epistle,—“Ye know,” says he, “the house,” (or household, the same word being indifferently rendered either way,) “of Stephanas, that it is *the first fruits of Achaia*; and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints;” 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Now here we have no positive information as to the number or age of the persons who composed the house or household of Stephanas. But yet one cannot help remarking that as this is the third case of household baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, it must have been very surprising if no infant or young child was found in *any one* of them. And if but one such little one was found in but one one of the cases recorded, that child was *as much a member of the*

household as the father himself, so that the record of *household baptisms virtually includes Infant Baptism*, though infants be not mentioned by name. Taking the lowest view of these three united examples, we cannot but maintain that they afford *a strong probability*, supposing they do not amount to *decisive evidence*, in favor of Infant Baptism.

If however our Baptist brethren will not even make us the concession of *a probability* in our favor, lest it should give their established scheme a shaking, but will still insist upon it that we have no clear example of Infant Baptism in the New Testament, then we must meet them with a counter affirmation, and firmly keep this ground, that we have no clear example *against it*. Thus far then the line of argument adopted in a former page, as to positive *command* or *prohibition*, is applicable to positive *example*; and therefore, we must call in other collateral considerations to our aid, to enable us to understand what was in reality the practice of the Apostles, and consequently what is the duty of the Christian church in this matter at the present day.

Now the first of these collateral considerations is, the ordinary acceptation of the word house or household in Jewish phraseology, as the writers of the New Testament were of the Jewish nation, and were accustomed to transfer and accommodate the language of their ancient religion and customs to the great religious concerns and events of their own times. By employing this perfectly just, reasonable, and scriptural mode of proceeding, in examining the import of the phrase now under discussion, we shall adopt a safe method of coming to a correct decision on the subject. There is a passage in Saint

Paul's epistle to the Hebrews which fully supports these views. "And Moses verily was faithful in *all his house* as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after ; but Christ as a son *over his own house ; whose house are we*, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end ;" Heb. iii. 5, 6. Now in each of these verses, the word "house," or "household," signifies the entire family of God's worshippers, with all that related to their spiritual concerns and government. The exact meaning of the word is the same in each instance, the application of it only being varied ; in the former it signified the Jewish, in the latter the Christian church. Even so, in whatever sense the word house or household is used in the Old Testament, when employed as a domestic term, in connection with families and family religion, in the same sense it is to be understood in the New Testament when employed in a like manner. Now we have this very word three times in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. "He that is born in thy house," household, or family, "and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised," &c. v. 13, and so again v. 23, 27. It included therefore as well the small as the great of Abraham's family, and Isaac afterwards when he was born. And this is its usual acceptation when families are spoken of in the Old Testament ; wherefore we conclude that this is its acceptation also when employed by the Jewish writers in the New Testament, and that consequently when a house or household are said to have been baptized, *all belonging to the family are included*, whether infants, children, or individuals of riper years. It is then of very little importance to know or to inquire whether or not

there were infants in the particular instances specified of Lydia, the Jailer, and Stephanas : for since the apostolic practice of baptizing households is sufficiently established, and since that word is now shewn to *have included all who were of the family*, we may be assured that even though there were no infants in any one of those three families, yet in whatever other families they were found, they would not be excluded, but comprehended as *a part of the household*, in the ordinance of baptism, at what time soever the parents embraced the gospel of salvation.

Connected with these observations on the application of the term house or household in the Old and New Testament, we have to notice the peculiar duties and responsibility of the master of the household, or the head of the family, as it is uniformly set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Of Abraham it is said, "For I know him that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment : that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken ;" Gen. xviii. 19. Moses' omission of the divine command in regard to the circumcision of one of his sons, from whatever cause it may have resulted, had nearly cost him his life ; Exod. iv. 20—26. "As for me and my house," said Joshua, "we will serve the Lord ;" Josh. xxiv. 15. But what terrible calamities befel the family of Eli, because of the want of the maintenance of paternal authority ! A severer sentence was never pronounced against man than that which youthful Samuel was charged to deliver to the venerable priest, whose personal integrity was nevertheless unimpeachable. "And the Lord said to Samuel, behold

I will do a thing in Israel at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house; when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile *and he restrained them not*. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever;" 1 Sam. iii. 11—14. Conscious of his responsibility, David resolved, "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart;" and sensible of his own insufficiency, he cried out for divine aid, saying, "O when wilt thou come unto me?" Psalm ci. 2. Now the same responsibility went down with the moral law, and in particular with the fifth commandment of it, to the heads of families, under the Christian dispensation, and is *to quite the same extent*, a part of the gospel of Christ. Of this we may be assured, as from the enforcement of domestic duties on the several branches of a family in general, so from one widely extended fact in particular, even the constitution of the church of Christ itself, which is described as a household, and the ministers of it as being both servants to God therein and rulers of the family, and so immediately accountable for their rule to him; Matt. xxiv. 45, and Rev. ii. 1, 14, 20, &c. It is impossible for more convincing and irresistible evidence to be produced of the *spiritual relation subsisting between the head of a household and his family*, when he embraces Christianity, than these scriptures afford, in which *domestic government is made a pattern and exemplar of*

ministerial government in the church of God. Hence the propriety of St. Paul's account of the qualifications of a bishop ; he must be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity ; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ?" 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5.

Now the carrying out of the great principle of domestic government in its application to religious matters, *for the sake of which it was chiefly established by God*,—see again that remarkable passage concerning Abraham, Gen. xviii. 19,—*necessarily involves the consequence of the dedication of the whole family to God*, so far at least as to bring them at once within the church, that all its means and appliances may be employed with the greater effect for their instruction, conversion, and salvation. Had not this been the case, what gross irregularities would have filled the church of Christ ? What a monstrous thing would it have been for instance, for a man to have been a Christian Bishop, and his children still unbaptized heathens ? For him to have been required to "*rule them well*," which of course means well in a Christian sense, and according to the principles of the gospel, and that from the first dawn of reason, and *yet not allowed to baptize them !* To rule them *as the church directed*, and yet not suffered to *bring them within the pale of the church !* Surely such an enormous evil would have never been tolerated by any of the Apostles ; they and all Christians understood it to be a matter of course that fathers and sons should be *under one law*, as members together of the same church, and each, *on exactly the same grounds*, accountable to God for the right and holy discharge of relative duties. If the children in future

life became wicked and apostates, that would be their own sin; but if the father had not brought them into the church, and under its supervision and control, that would have been his neglect, and he would have been guilty before God. We see therefore how natural it was for households to be baptized together; the head of the household desiring it on behalf of his children, and requiring it on the part of those who were under his jurisdiction and government, as an essential branch of his own personal duty to God; after which family worship could be *consistently* set up, and family religion *consistently* maintained.

The comprehensive design of the gospel of Christ is another collateral consideration tending to establish the Christian doctrine and practice of Infant Baptism. In this respect, more than in any thing else, it was distinguished from the law. The Jewish religion was national, the Christian religion was designed to be universal. Go ye into all the world, said Christ to his Apostles, "and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" he being *in the first instance*, as before explained, an adult; "but he," the adult, "that believeth not shall be damned:" Mark xvi. 15, 16. And again, "go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" Matt. xxviii. 19. By the apostolic commission, therefore, we see that the gospel was sent specially to "every creature," and collectively to "all nations," No language could possibly more fully declare that it was a universal blessing prepared and designed for universal man. Were infants then to have no share in its benefits, because they were infants,

and could not yet understand the preaching thereof? That of which they were capable, an induction into the visible church by baptism, was that to be withheld, because they were not capable of obeying a spiritual precept? If even a national religion could not be kept up and perpetuated without infant initiation into the ancient church, which was its main stay, how could a universal religion be maintained and propagated so as to become universal without it? It is in vain to say, by a more abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, if his influences remained only with a portion of the adult population, and they lived to increase new generations of heathens, with whom the whole work must begin *de novo*, instead of being perpetuated after a divinely appointed order, by the means of families, communities, and nations, till the earth itself "shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;" Isaiah xi. 9. When therefore the considerations now brought under review shall be added to the facts recorded concerning the baptism of households, scarce a doubt can remain that the Baptism of Infants is a true apostolic practice, for which reason it has been observed by almost all ages, in almost all churches, and in every part of the world, till the sect denominated Baptists came forth, *with their novel opinions, in comparatively modern times.*

Very fair and sufficient reasons may be assigned why we have not more examples of family or household baptisms, and a more explicit reference to Infant Baptism in the New Testament. In the first place baptism, as a christian ordinance is no where treated of at any length in the gospels or epistles, but is mentioned rather in an incidental way, along with some occurrence of great moment connected with it. See for instance the three

examples before quoted, of Lydia, the Jailer, and Stephanas. Probably nothing at all would have been written concerning the baptism of the household of Stephanas if the contentions at Corinth had not brought it out in this casual manner. Of some churches, whose origin is mentioned, we have not one word written concerning their baptism, as the churches of Galilee, Acts ix. 31 of Lydda and Saron, Acts ix. 35, and of Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch, Acts xi. 19—21 ; and yet we cannot doubt but that the several members really were baptized in the name of the Lord. Seeing therefore that this was a matter about which the early churches needed not any special direction, why should any one be surprised that it is not treated of in a more explicit way ? And then, secondly, it must be borne in mind that in the Apostolic times there was a peculiarity in the relative condition and constitution of the churches ; some were composed of believing Jews, some of Gentiles, and some of a mixture of both Jews and Gentiles. According to this observable difference as to their origin and nation, it is not improbable there was some diversity of practice. The Jewish believers probably preferred in many instances, even after their own personal baptism, to continue the ancient *method* of dedicating their offspring to God by circumcision, which, from deference to their educational and national prejudices might be allowed them, although they were not permitted on any account to impose circumcision on the Gentiles. The spiritual allusion which Saint Paul makes to *both* ordinances, seems to imply that for a season, in some instances at least, *both* were acknowledged and recognized as the ordinances of God in the Christian church. “ And ye are complete in him,” saith

he to the Colossians, "which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism," &c. Col. ii. 10—12. A mystical virtue is here attributed to both ordinances, as intended to be exhibited by the circumcision and baptism of Christ, and effectually secured by his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. A similar allusion to each ordinance is met with in the first Epistle of Peter: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" 2 Peter iii. 21. Nay, not only was there a yielding thus far to the prejudices of the Jews, but on one occasion in order that he "might become all things to all men," 1 Cor. ix. 22, in matters not sinful, Saint Paul thought it *expedient to superadd circumcision even to Christian Baptism*. For though Timothy was a "disciple," and "believed," and so of course had been baptized, and very probably in infancy, seeing he was the third generation of believers, 2 Tim. i. 5, yet when Paul "would have him to go forth with him," as his helper in the ministry, which was a remarkable occasion, as affording a striking example for the ministerial guidance of others, "he took him and circumcised him, because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek;" Acts, xvi. 1—3. Viewing him as but a Gentile, had he not received circumcision, those brethren would not have attended his ministry, or Paul's, because of his associate; and so both would have lost many opportunities of doing good,

and of saving the souls of men. And what rendered this case peculiarly remarkable and instructive was, *that at that very time they were setting out on their travels through the churches, for the purpose of "delivering them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem ; Acts xvi. 4, whereby the Gentiles were declared completely and for ever free from the yoke of the Jewish law.* Thus delightfully did Paul and Timotheus blend a mild and gentle spirit and demeanour, in yielding personally to the utmost, unto the invincible prejudices of their Jewish brethren, with the most unbending firmness in maintaining the just rights and privileges and freedom of the Gentile believers.

Now from all these observations it appears that it was not the will of God that baptism should be established *as a directly opposing rite* to circumcision, but that it should *supersede it gradually*, in a noiseless way, and without controversy, as the shadows of the law should more and more disappear before the increasing splendour of the Christian day. *But this very arrangement of divine providence goes also to shew the relative position of the one ordinance to the other*, and of course confirms the Christian doctrine, that in the one as in the other, infants should be, after the first generation, the proper subjects of the ordinance, and thus the correspondence between them be preserved to the end of time. In such circumstances it would have been unsuitable to the genius and spirit of Christianity, to have positively enjoined that *uniformly* infants should be dedicated to God *in baptism*. It was sufficient that it required—1, That all awakened persons who sought to be Christians, should be

baptized : 2. That in every case it was ready to receive and baptize entire households ; while, 3, It *allowed* a liberty to Jewish Christians still to prefer circumcision for their children if they chose. But then those children could only be regarded as members of the Jewish church, until baptism had been superadded at a subsequent period ; even as Paul when he met with some of John's disciples, added Christian baptism to the baptism of John ; Acts xix. 1—6. And indeed to lead to this gradual establishment of the Christian ordinance of baptism seems to have been one chief design of God in appointing John to connect the administration of baptism with his powerful preaching of repentance and faith in Christ whose forerunner he was ; that thus by a sort of intermediate stage he might introduce this holy ordinance in his day, with the intent of its becoming, on higher grounds, the standing initiatory ordinance for the Christian church in all future generations. These suggestions, gathered rather from the general range of sacred history, than from any particular text alone, will both explain the reason of John's baptism being confined to adults ; for they who received his baptism were Jews, and had been already circumcised in infancy, that intermediate dispensation not being opened when they were born ; and may also serve to shew that, looking at the relative positions of persons and things, and of the apparent intention of God, we cannot rationally expect for more to have been said distinctly bearing on the subject of Infant Baptism in the New Testament. The Apostles did baptize households ; and two of the instances if not all three, were the households of Gentile believers, where no Jewish prejudices stood in the way of the free and natural course of

the gospel, which was designed to save families *as such*, and bring them all at once into a common spiritual relation, as members of the church of the living God.

SECTION VII.

*Jesus Christ is the Lover and Saviour of Infants
and little children.*

When we reflect on the manner and circumstances of our divine Saviour's incarnation, there is something in the whole history which indicates a favor to be shewn to our infant race, from the commencement of the Christian age. No one would suspect the withdrawal of favor. John, his forerunner, was sanctified from the womb; his aged father, who had been chastened with dumbness for his unbelief, had his speech restored soon after his child's birth; for on the day of his circumcision the father was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied. In the beginning of the world, God manifested his goodness to man as an adult; in the beginning of the Christian era he manifested his goodness to and in the infant Saviour. Moreover, the first Adam was formed from the dust of the ground, a perfect man at once, when the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul; but the second man, the Lord from heaven, having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, "was made of a woman," and brought forth as a helpless babe, and "wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." The first man was created with all his faculties in their prime and vigour, as soon as he existed; the second, as he grew up from infancy to

manhood, "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man;" Luke ii. 52. Thus he sanctified the several stages of human life, *and rendered every period of it a fit season for consecration to the holy service of the Lord.* No sooner was he born than the name Jesus was given unto him, and that by divine direction, made known by the ministration of an angel, as though it were then signified to the world that God watches over the birth of infants, and that "their angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven;" Matt. xviii. 10. *The impartation of his name was specially connected with his initiation into the church, as a member of it; although his infant humanity could not understand the nature of the holy ordinance, or its conditions, or its obligations.* "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb;" Luke ii. 21. After this, when somewhat more than a month old, according to the direction of the law, Lev. xii. 3, 4, he was presented to the Lord in the Temple at Jerusalem; Luke ii. 22—24. At which time good old Simeon took him in his arms, and while embracing the child the venerable man sung his own dying anthem, saying,—“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel;" Luke ii. 28—32. Afterwards the wise men of the east rendered homage unto him. For “when they were come into the house, they saw the *young child* with Mary his mother, and fell down and *worshipped him*; and when

they had opened their treasures, they presented *unto him* gifts ; gold, and frankincense and myrrh ;” Matt. ii. 11. This was certainly quite contrary both to Baptist principles and to Popish practice ; for, according to the latter, they ought to have worshipped the virgin, of whom in this way they took no notice ;—well may the priests wish to keep the bible out of the hands of the common people ;—and, according to the former, the child could not understand one word of what was said, or the nature of the gifts presented, and so he was an *unfit subject* for receiving either civil or religious homage. We mean nothing offensive by such a classification ; *it is merely accidental in this one particular* ; for Popery is such a complete system of error, that the very best of men as soon as ever they stray into error on any point, *are, by that very circumstance, thrown into a sort of neighbourly alliance with Popery*, from which we heartily wish our good Baptist brethren to be wholly freed. Moreover, as soon as the wise men returned, Herod in his wrath “ sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men ;” Matt. ii. 16. Thus the first martyrs of the Christian era were infants, most of whom had been first circumcised, and accepted of God as members of his church on earth, and then had a short passage made for them by Herod’s sword up to the paradise of God. Nor, though unconscious of the martyrdom, can we doubt but that God will in the day of eternity crown them with a martyr’s reward.

Here then we have a rich series of events relating to infancy, connected with the birth of Jesus, the Son of

God. And now we may ask, In all this was not Jesus an exemplar to mankind? Hath not *the principle* of an infant dedication to God, in an initiatory rite, for the sake of being a member of the church of God from infancy, *been sanctioned in his person?* “Am I a Jew?” said the haughty Gentile Pilate to Christ in his manhood; and when we read Christ’s circumcision in his infancy, rejecting an initiatory ordinance in the gospel for infants, shall we virtually say to the infant Christ, what practical lesson is thy infancy to teach me, “*Am I a Jew?*” Alas! for that “mingle-mangle” kind of spirituality, to adopt good old Bishop Latimer’s phrase, which spiritualizes away the holy example of Christ in infancy, through a sincere but spurious zeal for the purity of the church of God, by recognizing none as nominal members of it, till in adult age, they give evidence of regeneration of heart! In infancy Jesus was presented in the temple; but would the presentation in the temple have been thought sufficient, or would it have been accepted *without the covenant sign and seal of circumcision?* Did not that *precede* Simeon’s prayer and blessing, to admonish us that *naming* a child along with prayer, is not to be *substituted* for God’s own method and order of *first initiating into the church*, and *then* presenting supplications to his throne on behalf of our children? If “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,” even as “the law by Moses,” John i. 17, the one corresponding in extent to the other, may we not recognize in the circumcision of Jesus Christ, the establishment of “grace and truth” for infants in all future ages, when the rites and ceremonies of the law should have passed away? If God accepted the infant Jesus, will he not for Jesus’ sake, accept our

infants in a dedicatory ordinance also? Why should our babes be denied the privilege of a religious act answering to that which was performed on the babe born in Bethlehem? And if in ancient days, some of the richest effusions of the Spirit on men of hoary hairs have been granted in connection with the dedication of infants to God, (see Luke i. 59—80, and ii. 22—38,) why may not our elders, our Simeons and Annas, receive a similar blessing on baptismal occasions, when *three generations at once* are numbered amongst the worshippers of the Lord God of Israel, who “hath been our dwelling-place in all generations?” Psalm xc. 1. If we deny the right, privilege, duty, and obligation of Infant Baptism, we render the circumcision of Christ in infancy, *so far as example is concerned, a mere nullity*; for it taught nothing to the Jews, with whom that ordinance had been long established; and it teaches nothing to us Gentiles, for then have we no ordinance resembling it under the gospel dispensation. By denying Infant Baptism we *partially* deny Christ as our example, and make his infancy go for nothing—a *useless* period of his life—his example only beginning with his personal discernment of good and evil, and so in fact, we have *no record* of him as an *example*, till he was twelve years of age!! *Thus more than a third part of his whole life is made to pass away, without his being practically of any service as an example to mankind!* But how does this agree with the announcement of “glad tidings” *at his very birth*? Ought not the angels rather to have been sent forth with the announcement when he was an adult? And should not their song have been reserved till the man Jesus was baptized in Jordan? *Why make so much*

ado about an infant? Why fill up so large a portion of the Gospels with an account of his infancy? And all this, without putting in a caveat somewhere, in some odd sentence or two, against the misapplication of this history in favor of infants at any future period? These are hard questions, however our Baptist brethren may dispose of them. But if we conceive, as truly we are bound to conceive, his holy and blessed life to have been, *from his very birth to the cross, as much an exemplification of Christian principles and duties, as of exact obedience to the spirit and letter of the law, since the law and Christianity in his person were inseparably represented*, then do we see in his infancy, circumcision, and presentation in the temple, a series of acts that *looked equally to the future with the past*, and read in them *an evangelical establishment of the duty of Infant Baptism*, when his gospel should be published to all nations.

Some further intimations of the will of God in this matter may be gathered from the peculiar tenderness and compassion of Jesus Christ towards infants, in the course of his ministrations.

The first instance on record of Christ's putting forth his divine power in raising the dead is that written in Matt. ix. 18—26. This miracle was wrought on behalf of a child, called by the father his "little daughter," Mark v. 23, and said by Luke to be "about twelve years of age;" Luke viii. 42. So rare a miracle as restoring life to the dead was not wholly unknown in the world, for the Holy Scriptures mention two such cases under the Mosaic economy, one wrought by the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 17—24, and the other by his successor,

the prophet Elishah; 2 Kings iv. 32—37. The sacred narrative in each case is deeply interesting. And to those instances St. Paul is supposed to allude when he says, “women received their dead raised to life again;” Heb. xi. 35. In each case it was not an adult but a child that was restored; and probably the Evangelists were directed to preserve the record of Jairus’ daughter, for this, amongst other reasons, that we might contrast the divine and inherent power of Christ, when he said to the damsel, “Talitha, cumi,—Damsel, arise!” Mark v. 41, with the merely intercessory power of Elijah and Elishah, whereby their personal inability was acknowledged to do this, or any other work, without the communicated aid of God, who himself wrought the miracle in answer to their prayer. However this may be, we are certain that Christ raised a young person to life, and that he *so* wrought this miracle as at once to honor the parental relation, and teach the great importance of *parental faith, as a connecting medium between Christ and the child on whose behalf his gracious help was implored*. “As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, saying, Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the master any further? he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, *Be not afraid, only believe;*” Mark v. 35, 36. This is more strongly expressed by the next Evangelist: “But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not; *believe only, and she shall be made whole;*” Luke viii. 50. Now besides the condescension and goodness of Christ towards young children, involved in this tender narration, the whole case goes to prove that where there is on the part of a child a natural inability to perform the ordinary condition on which the bestowment of

the divine blessing depends, God is graciously pleased to accept for the time the personal faith of the parents, without the personal faith of the child, and in honour of parental faith to communicate his heavenly benediction to their offspring. Even so in regard to baptism. As soon as any one hath become a believer in Christ, it is his duty to bring his children in the same ordinance to Christ *as a believer* : and God can and will accept them who are as yet incapable of believing for themselves, and communicate more or less of his quickening grace to their infant souls, though they be by nature “dead in trespasses and sins.” We cannot precisely understand *how* one person’s faith should benefit another individual, but both scripture and experience demonstrate that *thus it is in the order and appointment of God*. See for further illustration those remarkable passages, John xi. 26—40, and Mark ix. 22—24. Infant Baptism is acceptable to Christ the Saviour of children, because it is *a work of faith* ; the putting-off system is the fruit of unbelief.

Children were the partakers of Christ’s bounty, as well as the subjects of his life-restoring power. When he fed the multitudes in the desert place, “they that had eaten,” saith the Evangelist, “were about five thousand men, beside women *and children* ;” Matt. xiv. 13—21. Nay, according to another Evangelist, who is thought to be writing of this same miracle, it was *a lad* who furnished the food from which all the guests were fed. “Andrew said to Simon Peter his brother, *There is a lad here*,”—literally, “*a little boy*,”—“which hath five barley loaves and two *small* fishes,”—the loaves probably being proportionately small, about one person’s meal together ; “but what are they among so many ? And Jesus said,

Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the *men* sat down, in number about *five thousand* ;” John vi. 10 ; just the number of *men* mentioned in Matt. xiv. 21, Mark vi. 44, and Luke ix. 14. It is a curious circumstance that only Matthew observes that “ children ” were present ; yet they are *included* in the term “ multitudes,” just as they are in the *baptismal term* “ households,” and they were equally fed by the Master of the Feast ; and what is remarkable, as before observed, a little boy had in his basket the whole provision that was multiplied for so great a multitude.— Now in receiving that humble and scanty fare from a child, and in feeding the children along with the adults, as they all sat down on the green grass together, the children no doubt by their mothers’ side, or in their arms, our Lord Jesus Christ manifested his love towards children and his mindfulness of them. And although it is written, “ every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused *if it be received with thanksgiving* ;” 1 Tim. iv. 4 ; yet when Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and blessed God, and distributed the bread, he did not refuse it the little children, or stay to inquire whether some of them were not *too young to understand the condition of saying grace before meat* ; for he knew that they *needed food without grace*, even as our infants *need salvation without faith*, and therefore they were welcome to it ;— “ and they did all eat and were filled,” as well the children as the men and women, by the bounty of the great Lord of all. So again Matthew observes on a similar occasion, when many were fed with seven loaves, and a few small fishes, “ and they did all eat, and were filled ; and they that did eat were four thousand men, *beside*

women and children :" Matt. xv. 32—38. And would he thus care for the bodies of children, and make no provision for their souls? Would he feed them in a desert, and starve them out of his church? Work a miracle for their perishing nature, and be himself the means, through the introduction of a new system, of stopping the ordinary channel in which his earliest grace had been accustomed to flow towards them in their tenderest years from time immemorial? What force is there then in Christ's own mode of reasoning from the less to the greater; "Is not the *life* more than *meat*? and the *body* than *raiment*?" Matt. vi. 25. Carry out the argument, and inquire, Is not the *soul* more than the *body*? and *spiritual blessings* more than food in the desert? Will Christ then say and unsay? Do and undo? Will he contradict himself?—He that chuses to believe a system which fairly implies such a conduct, let him believe it! We are assured that he who fed children in the wilderness with bread, will not refuse the baptismal water of the sanctuary for their souls. So that viewing divine truth in a divine light, and observing with joyous delight that providence itself, where not obstructed by the sin of man, is but the hand-maid of grace, we see in the simple nourishment which the new-born babe draws from the mother's breasts, a token of that merciful provision which is made for them from their birth in the church of Christ, "which is the mother of us all;" Gal. iv. 26. And Saint Peter is right in drawing forth for us spiritual instruction from our infant race, when he saith—"as new-born babes, desire ye the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby;" 1 Pet. ii. 2. But no man has any right to receive spiritual instruction from infants, who will not allow spiritual good

in baptism to be imparted to them ; let them confine their studies to adult human nature, and to youth, which are the only periods of life with which they have properly any concern.

As a farther evidence of our gracious Saviour's love to children, we refer to the entire text, too long to quote here at large, Matt. xviii. 1—14, and its immediate connexion in the preceding chapter ; Matt. xvii. 22—27. Let it not be too much trouble to open the bible, and read, or at least, refer to the whole. Our Lord was now in Galilee, and abode in the house of Simon Peter, who was married, and probably had children, as we may infer from Matt. xix. 29. For it was he who said, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee ;" and to him our Lord replied, "every one that hath forsaken houses," &c. or "*wife, or children,*" &c. which Peter did, comparatively, when he accompanied our Lord in his painful journeys throughout Judea and Galilee. But whenever Christ returned to Capernaum, he honored Peter by being his guest, and no doubt conducting family devotion under his roof. Now this circumstance alone of Christ's dwelling with Peter intimates his love and grace for families ; and we are inclined to believe that he would really bless Peter's children, even in infancy, notwithstanding their inability to make a profession of faith in him, as Peter did when he said, "thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God ;" Matt. xvi. 16. And the probability is, that the "little child" he called unto him, and "set in the midst of the twelve," Matt. xviii. 2, was Peter's own child, whom Jesus had called often to his arms before ; and then he made that little child *a monitor to the entire college of Apostles !* As the whole of this edifying

scene and discourse took place at "Capernanm," and "in the house," Mark ix, 33, namely, of Peter, so the child was very young, for Jesus "took him in his arms," Mark ix. 36, and it should seem from Matthew that other children of the family were present also, hence the remark of Christ, "but whoso shall offend *one of these* little ones which believe in me," &c. Matt. xviii. 6. So again, "Take heed that ye despise not *one of these* little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;" v. 10. And again, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that *one of these* little ones should perish;" v. 14. The most natural interpretation of this entire scripture seems to arise from beholding our Lord and all the twelve in Peter's house, surrounded with Peter's family, and the youngest child in his arms, Christ teaching, from such an example, humility of mind to the future ministers of his holy gospel. Those children were all members of the existing church, and might therefore be consistently set forth as instructors to the founders of the Christian church; and they remembering such a lesson and such a scene, would surely never conceive it to be their apostolical duty to exclude children of any age from the church, after they had seen them so greatly honoured and blessed, and so distinctly acknowledged by their Lord. On reading the whole passage, and comparing one Evangelist with another, we can scarcely fail to be convinced of the truth and importance of a former section, in which it is made to appear that the religion of Christ is eminently *a family religion*, and designed specially to bless mankind in that relation of life.

On another occasion "little children" were brought

unto our Lord, "that he should put his hands on them, and pray;" Matt. xix. 13—15. Luke calls them "infants;" Luke xviii. 15. No doubt they were of different ages, some infants and some little children; and brought for different purposes, some to *be healed* by him, "that he would *touch* them," Luke xviii. 15, and others to receive his blessing, "that he should put his hands on them, and pray;" Matt. xix. 13—15. The fullest account of this transaction we have in the Evangelist Mark. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them;" Mark ix. 13—16. Now from this scripture, so full of inimitable tenderness, we learn that infants and young children ought to be brought to Christ *before they can believe in him*; for even before that age arrives he will receive them, *and they can receive his blessing*. What though these infants were incapable of touching the hem of his garment, accompanied by an act of faith, that virtue might go out of him, and heal them all? Still *he could touch them*, though they knew him not; and not only did he do this, but "he took them up in his arms, and blessed them." And if they could not pray to him, he could pray for them, and impart his divine benediction. And when the disciples rebuked the parents, Christ was "much displeased" with the twelve, and welcomed the

little ones to his embrace, and repeated in substance the lesson he had so recently given them at Capernaum, in the house of Peter. It is marvellous that the ministers of Jesus Christ, after reading this scripture, should refuse baptism to infants and young children, at what time soever they may be desired in that holy ordinance to present them unto God! Would Jesus touch them, take them in his arms, pray for them and bless them, and yet ordain that his church should effectually bar its doors against them, and not allow them admission within its privileged walls? Is Christ against Christ? *Is his ordinance at variance with his acts?* And how then can it be said, "Of such is the kingdom of God?" On Baptist principles, what do those words mean? "The kingdom of God" is a scripture phrase *exclusively belonging to the Christian Dispensation*, which *began* with the personal ministry of Christ, Mark i. 14, 15, and was established on the day of Pentecost. The subjects of this his kingdom were of two classes: First, As many adults as believed on him, who were denominated his disciples; and Secondly, *All infants of the then existing church of God*; hence the declaration in this text. Now, forasmuch as this phrase was to remain in the Gospels, and be the perpetual denomination of the Christian Church in all ages; and this declaration is here made in regard to infants and young children, without any limitation or qualification, as that—"of such is the kingdom of God" *for the present, for a short time longer*, till it is fully set up, &c. or without any intimation that the kingdom was shortly to undergo *a complete revolution*, and only have persons past the age of infancy as its members; what conclusion can we draw from the whole text but

this, that "the kingdom was one which could not be moved," and so the privileges of infants were amongst the "things that could not be shaken, but should remain?" Heb. xii. 27, 28. Christ, by recognizing *infants as members of his own church, on that occasion*, hath virtually recognized our infants as members of his church also, when our children, like those Jewish children, by the existing law of the dispensation under which they are born, have been dedicated to the holy service of God.

There is one scripture more in the holy Gospels indicative of our Lord's gracious regard for the young, which may be briefly examined, as to its bearing on the general topic now under discussion. "And when the chief priests and scribes," saith the Evangelist, "saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Matt. xxi. 15, 16. It appears to have been customary for the Jewish youths to attend their solemn religious festivals at the early age of twelve years; Luke ii. 42. These young choristers therefore, who were chanting in the temple a portion of one of the paschal psalms, which belonged to the approaching passover feast, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," were no doubt of that age and upwards. But in expressing his approval of their divine employment, in reply to the "chief priests and scribes," who were offended at this forward zeal of the young, our Lord most appropriately quotes another scripture, which goes back to a still earlier period of life, and states it to have been God's ordination to perfect

praise from the months of even “babes and sucklings.” If we collate the text in Matthew with Psalm viii. 2, a slight verbal variation will appear, but not the least contradiction. In David the text reads, “thou hast *ordained strength* ;” in Matthew, “thou hast *perfected praise*,” which is the Septuagint version of Psalm viii. 2. But “the *strength*” in David, means *the hearty acclamations of praise* in the Evangelist ; hence St. Luke’s observation that “the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and *praise God with a loud voice*”—with their whole *strength* both of heart and voice—“for all the mighty works that they had seen ;” Luke xix. 37. As to the different words “ordained” and “perfected,” the proper radical import of each is pretty nearly the same. It is metaphorical, and is taken from the care of builders *to lay a good foundation when they are about to erect a superstructure ; or to adjust and fit together the parts of a building*. Hence the marginal reading in our bibles of Psalm viii. 2, gives the text literally as it is,—“thou hast *founded strength* ;” which notion beautifully agrees with a verse in that very paschal psalm, from whence the multitudes and the youths quoted their loud hosannas, in which the church is compared to a building, and Messiah to the foundation,—“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner ;” Psalm cxviii. 22 ; and which words our Lord, in discourse with the same objectors on the following day, applied to himself in the Temple ; Matt. xxi. 42, Here then we perceive the order, scope, and beauty of the Psalmist’s prediction, in Psalm viii. 2, when applied to the songs of the Jewish youths in the Temple. God, by the ordinances of his sanctuary, and especially by the early

initiatory ordinance that constituted “babes and sucklings” in infancy members of his church, *laid a foundation for their future piety and praises*, which, when they, *as recognized members of his church*, tendered him in his sanctuary, were so far from meriting rebuke, that they ought to have been devoutly rejoiced in, as the accomplishment of his gracious designs concerning them, from their very earliest infant days. And whereas Psalm the eighth, and Psalm the hundred and eighteenth, from whence these quotations are taken, *belong almost exclusively to the Messiah, and his times*, we have in these citations of the Evangelist, an irrefragable proof that *the same principle pervades the Christian, equally with the Jewish church*. For if the prophecy concerning the rejected corner stone belongs to the Christian era, (and who can deny that ?) *so does the prophecy concerning “babes and sucklings” also ; and the foundation of their Christian praises is to be laid in their baptismal dedication to God*. Surely we have law, and gospel enough too, to establish the practice of Infant Baptism in this scripture ; for “*babes and sucklings*” are *here enrolled in the great Christian charter* ; and God, who willeth their praises, denieth them not water, but requireth their early introduction into his church, for *there* it is that praise is to be tendered unto him :—as it is written, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren, *in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee*.” Praise will always accompany the ordinance of Infant Baptism on the part of truly Christian parents, and a devout congregation ; and the purity and fervour of the praise will be in proportion to the believing recognition of the great principle on which this whole Treatise rests, *that baptism*

is a *redemption privilege*, and that infants have a right unto it, because they have been redeemed by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ our Lord. Wherefore the last words of the last paschal psalm may form an appropriate conclusion to a public baptismal service:—"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good : for his mercy endureth for ever;" Psalm cxviii. 29. Seeing then that infants are redeemed, we wonder not at the love which Jesus when on earth bore towards them; nor that the writings of the Evangelists contain so much information concerning Christ's own infancy, and so many evidences, during his ministry, of grace and good-will towards infants and children of every age.

Finally : It is now an almost universally admitted truth that all who die in infancy do "sleep in Jesus," their souls being received to heaven through his merits, and their bodies resting in the grave till the morning of the resurrection, when, after a new manner, and in a more exalted sense than was ever known on earth, "out of the mouth of those who were babes and sucklings he will perfect praise." What joyous hosannas will they then sing to the Son of David ! While envious and unbelieving scribes and priests are dumb with terror, they shall bear part in the chorus of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, and all the redeemed of the Lord, saying, "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?" 1 Cor. xv. 55.—And shall they be found worthy a throne in heaven, and be refused the sacramental water on earth ? Shall angels be their "ministering spirits," and Christian ministers refuse to admit them to become a part of their ministerial charge ? Are heaven and earth to be thus divided ? Hath Christ

one mind towards departing infants, and another mind towards living infants? Saith he to his angelic hosts, "Bear up the lambs of my flock in their expiring moments to my heavenly pastures;" and saith he at the same time to the under shepherds on earth, "Shut them out of my fold till they come of age to seek admission?" Nay, surely not. Christ is one, and hath but one purpose, which is thus expressed by Saint Paul,—“who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;” 1 Tim. ii. 6. And in order to this, he hath appointed in his church the means most likely to lead to salvation, of which the ordinance of baptism, as a standing ordinance for infants, is the earliest; and with it begins all the series of gracious means which God hath ordained to be observed for the securing of the salvation of mankind.

PART II.

REMARKS CONCERNING THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM IN CHRIST'S HOLY CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

OF BAPTISM ITSELF.

Having disposed of the main points at issue, relative to the proper *subjects* of Baptism, and endeavoured to prove that it is a Christian ordinance to which infants are entitled, we now come to matters of a secondary interest, of which kind of topics *the mode of administering baptism* has given rise to the greater number of controversies. Before, however, we enter immediately on that controversy, it may help to promote sober views and correct practice in the Christian Church, if we examine the nature of this divine institution itself, and make a few enquiries concerning the administrators thereof, and the time and place of administration. The nature of the ordinance will be briefly stated in this chapter.

Baptism is the most solemn and entire dedication of a redeemed sinner to God, in the performance of which service it is requisite that water be employed, and that the name of the Lord Jesus, or of each person of the Holy Trinity, be pronounced, at the time of its administration. This definition, we apprehend, takes in every

thing that can be considered *essential* to the holy and Christian ordinance of baptism.

Baptism then is an institution appointed for man as a fallen, and yet redeemed, creature. It is designed for none else, nor for him viewed in any other relation and character. It belongs not to holy angels, who are always pure; nor to the fallen angels, who “kept not their first estate,” for they cannot be made pure, but are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day;” Jude 6. To man it is not only an *initiatory rite*, but a *restorative ordinance* also, and is therefore most intimately connected with the great restorative economy of mercy in and by our Lord Jesus Christ. This point has been much insisted on in the former part of this Treatise; and from it we have already adduced scriptural arguments in favor of the universal right of infants to a participation of its benefits, inasmuch as the remedy for our moral disease is as extensive as the disease itself. Wherefore in the presentation of infants in baptism, the two facts chiefly to be borne in mind are, their original and native sinfulness, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ towards them, that so *humiliation* and *faith*, *penitence* and *confidence*, may be felt and exercised by those who present them, and outwardly expressed by him who administereth the ordinance. And in the case of adult baptism, they who are baptized are required to be in a state of heart in which these views and feelings shall be predominant. Thus Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to his awakened enquirers,—“*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;*” Acts ii. 38. In this exhortation,

faith is as fully implied as repentance is expressed and enjoined; for without faith, pardon and the gift of the Holy Spirit could not be obtained.

These observations concerning the nature of Christian baptism may serve to convince us that there is nothing really argumentative in the remark which is sometimes made relative to infants, that if they have a right to baptism, they have a right to the Lord's supper also, and ought to be brought to the Lord's table. At a proper age unquestionably they ought; nor, as a general rule, could the Jewish custom, of attending the passover from twelve years of age, be improved, sanctioned as it was by the example of our Lord. But it doth not follow *that infants ought* to be communicants. They who urge such a consequence upon us do not remember the essential difference, as to the nature of the two Christian sacraments. Baptism is an *initiator* ordinance, and so *to be performed but once*, on which ground *rebaptizing* by immersion those who have been previously baptized by sprinkling in infancy, is a *grievous offence and insult* against the laws and usages of almost the whole Christian church, and is nothing less than an *act of conscientious hostility and open war* against all denominations who are not of the Baptist persuasion, however holy and useful they may be. But the sacrament of the Lord's supper is a *confirmative* ordinance, and so is to be *often repeated*. So saith the Apostle, "*As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come;*" 1 Cor. xi. 26. Wherefore to confound together in one view things that essentially differ, is no better than beating the air. An infant may have a right to an initiatory ordinance, that "the child may be trained

up in the way he should go ;” Prov. xxii. 6 ; namely, the way of Christian faith and obedience ; but his right to the second ordinance must depend, in part at least, on his going in that way, for he may be rejected, if in future he depart from it, in opposition to his training and duty. Wherefore baptism being the gate of the kingdom, so far as the outward church is concerned, that gate stands open for every redeemed sinner as soon as he is born, in consequence of the redemption accomplished for him before he was born by Christ Jesus ; through whose redemption the salvation of every man is possible, and the salvation of every dying infant absolutely secured even without baptism, as is the case with all infants who die in heathen countries, and with all infants in christendom where by accident or neglect this privilege hath not been secured unto them. For though they have *a right* to the ordinance, the omission of it doth in nowise endanger their salvation, although their parents or guardians, unless it be accidental or unavoidable, are not to be accounted innocent in the sight of God.

Moreover, in the definition of the nature of this Christian ordinance before given, it was stated that “ Baptism is the *entire* dedication of a redeemed sinner to God,” which word *entire* is specially to be observed, for it expresses no more than the truth. O that this consideration were duly weighed, and this truth deeply felt in every heart. *It is the consecration of the whole man to God’s service for evermore* : not of this or that member, this or that faculty, this or that portion of life ; but of the whole body, soul, and spirit, from that day forwards and for ever. It is not possible therefore for any subsequent personal engagements, whether they be sacramental or

covenantal, to go beyond those which are already binding on such as have been presented in baptism to God. "O Lord," said David, "truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid;" Psalm cxvi. 16; and the same devout acknowledgment must every one make who hath been by her that bare him presented to the service of the Lord, for his gracious acceptance and blessing, in his holy house of prayer.

It is then a most serious mistake into which many persons fall, who decline taking upon them, as they suppose, a religious profession, by refusing to join themselves in Christian fellowship with any particular body of Christians, or by refusing to become regular communicants at the table of the Lord. They even speak, on some occasions, as though they were influenced by a conscientious fear of doing wrong; that is, they will actually be guilty of sin under the pretence of a fear of sinning. "We are resolved," say they, "never to make a profession of religion, till we can fully carry out that profession;" and they flatter themselves that certain defects, or omissions, or even delinquencies, are pardonable, and comparatively blameless, while they are not what they call *strict religious professors*. Yea, it may be they conceive themselves to be in some respects a great deal better than some such professors are. But what do they mean by all this vague and vain talking, whereby they stifle the voice of conscience, grieve the Holy Spirit, and lull their souls into the sleep of a fatal carnal security? Do they mean to become *apostates*? Do they intend to *renounce their baptismal obligations*? Or to *deny them*? From a conscientious dread of professing to be religious, will they profess to be *irreligious*? Do they not know that

in thus "halting between two opinions," 1 Kings xviii. 21, they virtually cast the fear of God behind their back, and turn against Christ after he hath redeemed them, and they have been presented to him? The most solemn covenant ever made with God cannot contain any thing in depth and fulness of meaning more sacred than the baptismal ordinance, in which the name of a sinful child of man is given him in connection with the name of each person of the Holy Trinity, on which occasion the entire body and soul of him who is baptized is consecrated to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as his redeemed property, to be sanctified for his holy service for evermore. Wherefore every baptized person who sins against the gospel of Christ is a thousand-fold greater sinner than the ignorant heathen. For all his sins *have in them the nature of infidelity and apostacy*, so that he is daily *a covenant breaker*, however thoughtlessly he may live, or, forgetful of so serious a fact, however vainly he may imagine that he is not bound *as yet* by any religious profession to become *altogether* religious and godly. Bound he is to obey the whole gospel, and no man can set him free from his religious obligations. Infidelity itself cannot release him. As no one born and living within this realm, can procure for himself freedom to break the laws of the land, and commit treason with impunity, by a mere bold declaration that he has renounced his allegiance to the sovereign, so no one born in christendom, and brought up within the pale of the church, can release himself from the obligations of Christianity, not even though he boldly join the infidel throng, and occupy the scorner's chair. Let this great and weighty truth be brought to bear upon the consciences of men,

who really have any conscience left, and it will completely “sweep away the refuge of lies under which they have hid themselves;” Isaiah xxviii. 17. It must constrain them, if they will but yield to that which is right, to come out from the ungodly, and to act worthy of the eternal obligations to godliness and holiness which have been so long time resting upon them without being reflected on, or regarded. And this is an argument that Christian parents should constantly keep before the eyes of their children, and may be repeated to them whenever they have witnessed Infant Baptism in the sanctuary, so that their offspring may be reminded whose they are, and what the Lord their God requireth of them, to fear the Lord their God, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, for their good always.

Thus far have we dwelt on the spiritual character of this holy ordinance. But in addition thereto, and yet significative of the same thing, there must be the employment of water, “as an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace.” It is evident that water was used in every instance of baptism recorded in the New Testament, whether during John’s baptism, or the succeeding Christian baptism, that was introduced and established in the church by the Apostles of our Saviour. Hence arose the phraseology of St. Paul; “the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” Titus iii. 5. And the Apostle’s own experience agreed thereto; for Ananias said to him at the time of his conversion. “Arise and be *baptized*, and *wash away* thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord;” Acts xxii. 16. So our Lord himself, in his conversation with Nicodemus, conjoins a being “born of *water* and of the Spirit;”

John iii. 5. The water alone is useless without the Spirit. But however deep our conviction of that truth may be, it will not justify any one in neglecting the outward ordinance, since it is in the use, and not in the neglect of outward ordinances, that his blessing is to be sought, and his spirit received, according to the following promise,—“Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways;” Isaiah lxiv. 5. Nor can it be doubted that in very many instances the Holy Spirit is actually given to the infants of truly pious parents, when in faith and prayer, they, at the baptismal font, dedicate their offspring to God who hath redeemed them, as may be reasonably concluded from the frequent remark of such individuals in riper years, that they cannot recollect the period of life in which they felt not divine influence, so early did the Spirit of God begin his gracious work upon their minds.

- It is therefore an error of considerable magnitude, into which some persons of unquestionable piety have fallen, to suppose that the baptism of the Spirit *alone* is to be sought, which, if any one have received, the baptism of water may be dispensed with as a merely carnal ordinance. This appears to be a *radical defect* in the esteemed Society of Friends, to the constitution of whose body, (it can hardly be called an *ecclesiastical* constitution, for there can be no church where there are no sacraments,) the words of Christ may be considered as appropriate, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;” Matt. v. 19. According to their views and impressions, their salvation may not be endangered, yet doubtless their glory in the heavenly world will be lessened thereby; and their sys-

tem itself must ultimately fail for want of God's appointed means to secure his permanent blessing. Occasionally an individual has been met with in these parts in the Wesleyan Society, who, without knowing it, has reasoned on their principles. Having been brought to repentance, and experiencing more or less of the power of divine grace in their hearts, they have concluded that having the thing signified already in possession, the sign denoting it was for them unnecessary. But the case of Cornelius, when fairly looked at, has generally convinced them of their mistake. Cornelius had long feared God, and wrought righteousness, and was accepted of him. His prayers and alms had come up for a memorial before God; and he was specially instructed by an angel to send for Peter, who should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. On Peter's preaching the gospel to as many as were present, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on the Apostles at the beginning, insomuch that they of the circumcision who accompanied Peter were astonished when they heard the Gentiles also speak with other tongues, and magnify God. Then Peter "*remembered the word of the Lord*, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; *but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*;" Acts xi. 16. Here then was a clear and distinct acknowledgment that the spiritual baptism was bestowed, accompanied by miraculous gifts also, and that the gift was in fulfilment of the divine promise. How then did the Apostle act? Did he say, Seeing these Gentile believers have received the baptism of the Spirit, what need have they of water? In no wise; but in direct opposition to such a refined and mystical spirituality, which makes nugatory an ordinance of divine appointment, he at once inquired, *Can any man forbid water, that these should*

not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord ;” Acts x. 47, 48. A more decisive example of the importance of duly observing the outward ordinance, even after the fullest attestation of the divine favor and acceptance, could not be desired. The Ethiopian eunuch and Saul of Tarsus were saved in the use of the ordinance, Acts viii. 39, and ix. 18, and Cornelius and his friends before baptism, Acts x. 11 ; but however diversly the Lord, the Spirit, may choose to act, or in whatever manner he may be sent forth from the Father, we are taught this one unalterable lesson in regard to Christian baptism, namely, that “ what God hath put together, no man may put asunder.” The water used was figurative of inward cleansing, whether *sought* or *obtained*, and corresponded in its mystical import to the ablutions under the law, as saith the Psalmist,—“ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ;” Psalm li. 7. No baptism then can be complete unless the outward element of water be employed ; but in what particular manner, whether by sprinkling, pouring, or dipping, is of comparatively little moment, since the *mode* of administration is *not essential to its right and due performance*.

As it is requisite that water be used in baptism, so is it also necessary that the name of the Lord Jesus, or of each person of the Holy Trinity be pronounced, at the time of its administration. The former method seems to have been customary when the Jews and Jewish proselytes were baptized. For they being already believers in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and acquainted with the scripture revelation of God as Jehovah Elohim, it was only needful to add to their general faith, a distinct acknowledgment of their

faith in Christ as the true Messiah, foretold by the Prophets, through whom alone the world could be reconciled unto God. Hence Peter commanded the penitent Jews on the day of Pentecost to be "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ;" Acts ii. 38. And the believing Samaritans were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;" Acts viii. 16. "And Cornelius and his friends were baptized in the name of the Lord;" Acts x. 48. The original command however in regard to all nations, the Gentile nations who should be turned from their idolatries and polytheism to the one true and living God, by the power of the gospel, ran thus,—“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" Matt. xxviii. 19. From that command the mode now universally adopted appears to be derived. And yet, in truth, in baptizing in the name of Jesus, every thing expressed in the command is fully implied; for it comprehends faith in his divinity, and in the efficacy of his death and redemption, which no one can hold without sound views of the essential union and eternal relation subsisting between and in the persons of the Godhead, and of their distinct offices in the great work of saving and recovering man to the favor and image of God. However, the form contained in the words of the Evangelist Matthew was probably intended to be, as it actually has become, the permanent form, for the Christian church, when the Jewish system and peculiarities should give place to the lasting institutions of the gospel of Christ. In this respect, therefore, we may conclude that no further change will henceforwards take place, even to the latest ages of the world; this is the "one baptism" that is to remain till time shall be no more.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ADMINISTRATORS OF BAPTISM; AND OF THE
TIME AND PLACE OF ADMINISTRATION.

The topics mentioned in this chapter are amongst the *circumstantials* of Baptism, and do not enter immediately into its nature, or affect the validity of the ordinance itself. Concerning the administrators of this ordinance however, *as a general rule*, it seems to be fitting and decent in itself, and also scriptural, because in accordance with what we learn of Christian order in holy writ, that the ministers of God's holy word should be chosen for this service. If any other Christian person be employed, it should only be on the ground of necessity, when the services of a Christian minister cannot be obtained. In the days of his ministration on earth, Jesus himself, as an example to his ministers, took little children in his arms and blessed them; and ministers, as his representatives, are in this respect to imitate him. Throughout John's life, he baptized his awakened hearers, as it is written in the gospel, "John did baptize in the wilderness," as well as "preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" Mark i. 4. John also had the high and singular honor of baptizing our Lord in Jordan, on which occasion Jesus said, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;" Matt. iii. 15. Wherefore as he was fulfilling all righteousness in submitting to baptism, so it was *a part* of that fulfilment of

righteousness that he received it from the hands of God's appointed messenger. With this agrees the command of Christ given to 'his Apostles after his resurrection ; " Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. Matt. xxviii. 19; the same persons who taught the nations were to baptize them. And accordingly the Apostles, or some of their fellow-helpers, appear in ordinary cases to have baptized those who believed, as we may read in the Acts of the Apostles. Nor are the words of Saint Paul, " For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," 1 Cor. i. 17, to be interpreted as intimating a contrary practice. What the Apostle here maintains is that preaching the gospel was a much higher and greater work than baptizing, and constituted the principal part of his apostolic calling, which was undoubtedly true. Moreover his words to the Corinthians had an especial reference to the state and condition of the church at Corinth. The Apostle knew their character, and had either a natural or a supernatural insight into the moral constitution of that church, and therefore acted with extreme caution in reference to the future, and assigns his reason for that caution :—" I thank God," saith he, " that I baptized none *of you* at Corinth, but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, *lest any*"—that is *any of you Corinthians*—" should say that I had baptized in my own name;" 1 Cor. i. 14—16. But though Paul himself baptized not at Corinth, where he continued " a year and six months," and converted " much people," Acts xviii. 10, 11, yet he had from the beginning the help of Aquila, Acts xviii. 2, and soon after of Silas and Timotheus, Acts xviii. 5, so that most probably they baptized the converts, for it was

not until about the time of their arrival that Paul began to see the fruit of his labour. Now this brings us to the same point again, that to baptize is a duty properly belonging to the ministerial office, the presentation being made by the parents much after the manner that the parents of our Lord presented him to Simeon in the temple.

In regard to *time* and *place*, we have no commandment from the Lord. Christianity seems here to allow a latitude not granted under the law. Circumcision was to be observed on the eighth day after the birth, but the nature of that rite rendered its performance unsuitable to a congregation, so that it was attended to within the family, and under the parental roof. This was probably the case in regard to many of the early baptisms, especially when whole households were baptized at once: see, for instance, the account of Lydia and the Philippian jailer, Acts xvi. 15, 33, and the history of Cornelius, Acts x. Indeed, at first the Jews would not have tolerated Christian baptism in their synagogues, and the Christians had not public churches erected, so that of necessity many of the baptisms must have taken place in private dwellings. At what time the practice became common, as amongst us now, of baptizing in the house of God, it may be difficult to ascertain. But probably as circumcision gradually fell into disuse, and the law in its ritual services disappeared, a sort of general desire gained strength on the part of Christian mothers and parents to imitate the example of the mother of our Lord, by presenting their offspring to Christ in this holy ordinance, *on the earliest occasion* that offered when they were able to go up to the house of the Lord. And from some such general impression may

have resulted the customary and fitting practice of contributing somewhat on such an occasion by way of thank offering to the Lord. Or, if such ancient legal observances be not the origin of our present established customs, we may at least piously and devoutly refer to them, and have our spirit refreshed thereby, when we bring a gift to him who saveth in childbearing, and accepts the dedication of our infant offspring at our hands. Nor is the excellent religious feeling of many Christian women, who are unwilling to visit any where, after the birth of a child, till they have been up to the house of the Lord, and given up their infant to Christ in baptism, to be despised : on the contrary, the principle ought to be honoured and cherished, for it is quite in character with the direction to “ seek *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ;” Matt. vi. 33 ; the services of the sanctuary being preferred before friendly congratulations, or at least devoutly associated with them. And it is certain there is much that is deeply interesting to a Christian congregation, and to the holy angels in that assembly, when an infant is received from the mother’s arms, and by the minister solemnly baptized, at which time ministerial, parental, and congregational prayers, are blended in one united supplication for the child’s pardon, regeneration, holiness, and salvation. Nor is it decent and fitting that this part of Christian worship should be performed in a corner, or at the close of the service, when such as are too soon wearied of devotion are for hurrying away ; but rather it should be believingly attended to without hurry, and yet *concisely*, without tedious formality, at such a period of the public service, and before sermon, as will ensure the attention of all who may be in the house of prayer. On such occasions, adults may well reflect on

their own infant days, and on the responsibility of their life, according to the number of years that have fled away, and the gracious opportunities that have been enjoyed; and children may have enforced on them the great command, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth;" Eccles. xii. 1.

But there is one thing that should be deeply pondered and well understood by Christian parents, when they are bringing a child for baptism in the house of the Lord. Were it thoroughly weighed it would prepare them for what of future trials may await them, and cause them to be duly impressed with the importance of that universal prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is heaven.'" It is this. The dedication of an infant to Christ in baptism is so entire, that *in its spiritual import it is to be considered as similar to the act of Abraham in offering up Isaac on the altar*; for it is a solemn and absolute surrender of the child back to him from whom the parents have received it, to be at his entire and unreserved disposal. When therefore his will is ascertained in the course of future providences, the parents have nothing to do but abide by their own voluntary surrender and consecration of their child to him. "I have lent my Samuel to the Lord," said Hannah, "as long as he liveth;" 1. Sam. i. 28. If God be pleased to take away the child by death, they have put it out of their own power to say any thing more than, "the will of the Lord be done;" or if in riper years he call the child for missionary service, however difficult or dangerous the enterprize may be, the parents are not at liberty to interfere; but remembering the day of his baptismal vows, he must go, accompanied with their blessings and their prayers: or if a business be chosen for him, or a situation in life, it must be with an

eye to his and their baptismal obligations, the primary object being, not wealth, but freedom from temptation to sin, and the most favorable circumstances for carrying out his baptismal obligations in practical obedience to all the commands of God. No mother after giving a child to Christ in baptism can resume the gift; she is bound by her own act and deed to leave her infant to his sovereign and gracious disposal in all things. As Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother of Moses—"Take this child and nurse it for me;" Exod. ii. 9; so the Christian mother must receive her child back from the minister's arms after baptism, and nurse it for the Lord, to be at his beck and call any day, and for any place, and she must count it a greater honor to have borne a child for Christ's holy service, than if many crowns had been appointed him, with all the splendors of an imperial throne. Whoever doth not endeavour, on the day of her infant's baptism, to come up to this high yet blessed standard of Christian duty, is but frail and imperfect in her services, even though she may be sincere in her *general* desire of knowing, embracing, and doing the holy will of God. Were the spirit of this divine ordinance more deeply felt and entered into by parents themselves, the blessing of God would more abundantly rest upon the head and heart of their offspring, and their seed would be more generally accounted to the Lord for a generation; Psalm xxii. 30. These few observations may suffice for a guidance, as to what is most valuable in practice, in regard to the time and place of baptism, and the administrator at whose hands it should be received. Our next topic may require a somewhat more extended discussion.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE MODE OF ADMINISTRATION.

There is nothing more humiliating, in the practical working of Christianity, than the trivial nature of many of those differences which divide the Christian world, and the eagerness with which they are controverted, as though on them mainly the salvation of the soul depended. Some of those differences do not in any wise affect Christian doctrine, nor scarcely come within the range of even Christian discipline, but only refer to *the mode* of performing a certain branch of duty, and so belong to nothing more than what may be called *the rituals of Christianity*. Whether men should pray with or without a form; how many *orders* of Christian ministers should be maintained, and whether that maintenance should be voluntary or secured by law; what power they should exercise, and what vestments they should wear, or whether they should minister without any distinguishing vest, which may be fitting and comely as an insignia of office; *how* the Lord's supper should be received, whether sitting or kneeling; and *how* baptism should be administered, whether by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, have all been topics of many a weary controversy, in which good men have consumed their time, and expended their energies, to the neglect of higher and holier duties while the world of sinners around

them have been perishing in their sins. Now with regard to *the mode* of baptism, to us it seems of so little consequence, that we have scarcely a preference of one method above another, excepting that, as a matter of convenience, and health, and as suitable to all seasons of the year in this climate, we think sprinkling, without being less efficacious, is much more simple and easy of adoption. Nevertheless, if any adult, *who had not been baptized in any way in infancy*, should earnestly desire immersion; or any Christian parents should request immersion on behalf of their infants, probably few Christian ministers would be so strenuous for the more general practice of sprinkling, as to refuse compliance with their wishes. *Rebaptizing*, under the notion that sprinkling is no baptism, is altogether another thing. Against such a practice, every Christian who holds not Baptist sentiments, is bound to protest as an infringement upon the Christian liberty, and a reflection upon the ministerial acts of others. It contains within it the very spirit of what are now called Puseyite, or High-Church principles; for it is of little consequence by what route we come to the point of *exclusivism*, whether by the road of apostolical succession, or the *less tolerant path* of what is called believers' baptism. In the one case the validity of the Christian ministry, in the other case the validity of the Christian profession itself, is denied. The requiring of persons who have been sprinkled in infancy to be plunged, as a condition of their admission into Baptist churches, is an act of open hostility against the whole Christian world; and though not intended to be understood in so offensive a light, is nothing less than a declarative nullification of the Christian profession of the members of all the churches

of Christendom, the Baptists only excepted. Viewed *in its real character*, and not according to the charitable interpretations of pious Baptists, who leap over the wall of exclusiveness which *their system* builds up and supports, *we know of no assumptions so monstrous as those which legitimately flow from their principles*, or of any conclusions so contrary to true Christian philanthropy.

In a former part of this work we have seen that those principles require an universal excommunication of infants, or, what amounts to the same thing, a shutting of them out of the church of Christ. And now we see that if no baptism is legitimate but baptism by immersion, *the whole body of professing Christians, without regard to persons or communities, are of necessity unchurched and unchristianized*, and have *all to begin anew*, and be inducted by a proper and lawful baptism into the church of Jesus Christ. We apprehend it is on this ground that *strict Baptists* refuse to partake of the Lord's supper with any who are not of their own persuasion, because, however estimable their character, they do not consider them as being Christians. This is making the most of a shibboleth certainly, but still not more than the principles of the denomination require. So that the head and the heart of the many worthy and noble-minded men found amongst our Baptist brethren must ever be at variance, when they extend the right hand of fellowship towards us, and own us as *Christian* brethren, and commune with us as *Christian* churches; while the poor narrow-souled bigots amongst them, (and they are not a few,) who know very little of the religion of Christ, beyond the baptism of water, and a set of confused notions about election, will be the only individuals who can claim the merit of *down-*

right, thorough consistency. Now all this condemnatory uncharitableness against us arises in part from making *the mode* of administering a Christian ordinance of more importance than it really is ; from which evil we who hold Infant Baptism are free, since we can unhesitatingly own our Baptist brethren as fellow-Christians, without doubt or scruple, while it costs them an effort to do it in some circumstances, and some of them will not do it at all.

Indeed the Christian world might justly and reasonably complain, if grounds of contention were sought for, of the denominational appellation, Baptists ; for there is an uncharitableness in the very name when applied to one section of the Christian church only, as it contains an unwarrantable reflection on all other churches, as though baptism were not rightly understood or observed by them. *Whereas all Christians are Baptists of course ;* and the latter term ought not to be assumed in a distinctive and invidious way by any one church, so as to convey an idea of its pre-eminent observance of the sacred ordinance of baptism ordained by our Lord. However, it is but just to acquit our Baptist friends, both of England and America, of any intentional unkindness towards us, especially as they have taken a mighty stride in the way of improvement in this matter within the last few years. Our Baptist brethren, ever to be honored and beloved for their missionary labours and success, have lately become revolutionists, and have, on a certain subject, attacked the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the American Bible Society, sword in hand ; but instead of harming those noble societies, they have hewed to pieces some of their own former controversial opinions in a most unmerciful manner. Time was when much discussion was

wasted upon the meaning of the Greek words, *bapto* and *baptizo*, from whence our English word baptize is derived, with scarcely any change of orthography, and our Baptist brethren strenuously maintained that those words signified to dip, immerse, or plunge, and they endeavoured to *restrict* the words to some such signification, and for that reason they considered the denomination *Baptists* to be strictly proper for them, because in baptizing, they, and they only, acted according to the proper import of these words. But now they have given all this up at a stroke, not only in England and America, but in the East Indies also, *by refusing to transfer their own favorite word baptizo*, from which their very denominational name is derived, into foreign languages, and insisting on *translating it* into some word in those languages which shall be *an exposition of it*, according to their views, and so made to mean unequivocally to dip or plunge. Much as we lament their zeal on this point, which has actually induced them *on this ground alone* to separate from the Bible Society of both countries, (another proof of the evil arising from overmuch zeal for modes and forms,) yet we cannot but perceive that they have overshot the mark, and by an unwillingness to *naturalize* the word, according to the equitable proposal of the Bible Society; leaving *the interpretation* to the different Christian churches, as with us, they have betrayed a latent doubt that the word alone is hardly trustworthy, and so instead of endeavouring to *monopolize it*, as formerly, they judge it will be a more effectual method to *transform it* by recasting it in a mould of their own. It is allowable then for the advocates of Pedit-baptism to rejoice in the lucky escape of the two foreigners, *bapto* and *baptizo*, from the

long captivity in which our Baptist brethren endeavoured to retain them ; those brethren at last have either generously given them their liberty, or else in the heat of controversy they have forgotten to watch them so narrowly as beforetime, one can hardly say whether : however it is certain the Baptists dare not trust them any longer, so that they are now free to travel all through Christendom, and to make alliances in future with sprinklers equally with immersers all the world over. Charity and consistency only require one thing more of our brethren, namely, that they give up their own distinctive appellation, and instead of calling themselves Baptists, *translate their denominational name into Immersers*. We apprehend something of this kind must be done in the East, or else the native Christian ministers, as they acquire knowledge of the history of the European churches from whence their missionaries came, and an ability also to compare their native translations with the Greek text, will want to know *why* their European brethren kept the word Baptists for themselves, and yet were afraid to venture the committal of baptizo into their hands ? It is hard for contenders about modes and forms to be at all times consistent ; yea, it is impossible in Christianity, for Christianity will not be trammelled with them. Every extreme contains within itself the germ of its own destruction.

But though we consider *the mode* of baptizing to be of comparatively little moment, yet for the satisfaction of Christian persons it may be useful to refer to the word of God on this subject also. And first we will put down in order, a list of all the texts in which baptism is spoken of in the New Testament, and so arrange them that the

parallel passages may be compared in the several Evangelists. They are these :—Matt. iii. chapter throughout ; Mark i. 1—11 ; Luke iii. 1—23, &c. ; John i. 6—36 : Matt. xi. 2—19 ; Luke vii. 18—35 : Matt. xiv. 1—12 ; Mark vi. 14—29 ; Luke ix. 7—9 : Matt. xvi. 13, 14 ; Mark viii. 27, 28 ; Luke ix. 18, 19 : Matt. xvii. 10—13 ; Mark ix. 11, 13 : Luke i. 16, 17 ; Matt. xx. 20—23 ; Mark x. 35—40 : Luke xii. 49, 50 : Matt. xxi. 23—27 ; Mark xi. 27—33 ; Luke xx. 1—8 : Matt. xxviii. 18—20 ; Mark xvi. 15, 16 : John iii. 22—36 ; iv. 1—3 ; v. 33—36 ; x. 39—42 ; Acts i. 4, 5, 21, 22 ; ii. 37—41 ; viii. 12—16, and viii. 35—39 ; ix. 15—18 ; Acts x. 37—48 ; xi. 15—18 ; xiii. 23, 24 ; xvi. 14, 15, and xvi. 25—34 ; xviii. 8, 25 ; xix. 1—7 ; xxii. 16 ; Rom. vi. 3—5 ; 1 Cor. i. 13—17 ; x. 1, 2 ; xii. 13 ; xv. 29 ; Gal. iii. 26—29 ; Ephes. iv. 5 ; Col. ii. 12 ; Heb. vi. 2 ; 1 Pet. iii. 21.—Let the lover of God's word read over these scriptures, one by one, it cannot be a vain or unprofitable employment. A great portion of them relate to John's baptism, which was a *temporary* dispensation, as John himself taught, when he said of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease ;" John iii. 30. With him the law terminated, "for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John ;" Matt. xi. 13 ; and with his ministry the gospel era began, so St. Mark expressly testifies,—*"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God : As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee ;"* Mark i. 1, 2. Hence the statement of Peter just before the day of Pentecost :—*"Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out*

amongst us, *beginning from the baptism of John*, unto the same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection;" Acts i. 21, 22. But when the Spirit was poured out from on high, then John's dispensation entirely ceased. Hence it was not necessary for Cornelius to be inducted into the Christian church, through the intermediate dispensation of John, now passed away, and therefore he was at once "baptized in the name of the Lord;" Acts x. 48. But it was necessary that *John's disciples* should be *again baptized* into the *higher dispensation* of the gospel, and therefore those imperfect believers whom Paul found at Ephesus, who had already received "John's baptism," were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;" Acts xix. 1—7. Now one may perceive much of the divine wisdom and goodness in thus interposing a temporary middle dispensation between Moses and Christ, that so Christ might in all respects become "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" Rom. x. 4. Ablutions and washings of various kinds had been common under the law, all of which denoted the necessity of a moral and spiritual cleansing. It was not consistent with the nature of Christianity that those ablutions should remain, after the system of sacrifices, &c. with which they were associated should have passed away; but it was consistent and fitting that *one ordinance* derivable from them should be gradually introduced and permanently remain, and the way for this was prepared, by appointing John, in connection with his powerful ministry, to be the baptizer of those who repented of their sins. And thus the ministry and the baptism of John terminated in the Christian ministry and in Christian baptism,

as we have both preserved unto us at the present day. Christianity alloweth not a multitude of washings, but one "washing of regeneration" only is commanded, as the perpetual sign of that spiritual cleansing required for the soul of man.

In regard to the *subjects* of John's baptism, they were in all probability *adults* only; for being but temporary, and in that sense imperfect, his own disciples would need baptizing again on entering the Christian church, when the Christian economy should be complete. Nor does it appear that John baptized women; the honor of abolishing the last vestige of inferiority in the bestowment of religious privileges was reserved for Christianity, where there is "neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; but all are one in Christ Jesus;" Gal. iii. 28. Lydia is the first female whose baptism is *recorded* in the New Testament: although we cannot by any means from that circumstance infer that no females received Christian baptism before her. No doubt the mother of Timotheus, who was a believer, had been baptized; Acts xvi. 1; and those "widows" mentioned Acts vi. 1, and others who were of the early churches. Still there is something gratifying in the fact that the first female of whose baptism we have a particular account *was a Gentile* worshipper of the God of Israel, as though in her case one of the chief glories of Christianity should be made distinctly to appear.

But our main concern at present, is with *the mode* of John's baptism; for Christian baptism succeeding to his temporary ordinance, it were but reasonable to suppose that in the beginning the mode of administration would be nearly the same. It is reasonable to form such a con-

clusion, First, Because Jesus Christ himself received John's baptism ; and Secondly, Because *some* at least of Christ's Apostles were John's disciples before they became the followers of the Lord. This was the case with Andrew, Simon Peter's brother ; John i. 35—42 ; and by Peter *Christian* baptism was introduced on the day of Pentecost ; Acts ii. 38. The primary question then is, How did John baptize ? Our Baptist brethren will think such a question altogether unnecessary. To their minds it is clear to a demonstration that John *immersed* his disciples in the water ; and they will wonder how any one can doubt it. But let us take time to consider, and calmly examine the scriptures to which they so confidently appeal. We think the result will be a conviction that, even if *certainty*, as to *the mode* of John's baptism, cannot be obtained, still the *probabilities are far greater in favor of effusion, or pouring water on, than of immersion, or putting under water.*

We begin with the baptism of our Lord in the river Jordan. The deeply interesting account is recorded by all the Evangelists. We shall only quote Matthew at length. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me ? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water ; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him : And, lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ;"

Matt. iii. 13—17. We have the same account abbreviated in Mark i. 9—11. Luke mentions three additional circumstances : first, that Jesus was “praying” at the time of baptism, with a hallowed fervor we may be assured peculiar to himself. Thus Christ, as his Apostles, Acts ii. 1, received the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer. And, secondly, that he was not baptized *alone*, but along with *many others* : “Now when *all the people were baptized*, it came to pass *that Jesus also*, being baptized, and praying,” &c. Luke iii. 21, 22. Hence those pictures of this scene, which commonly represent our Lord as standing alone in the water, are far enough from the truth. Thirdly, Christ was now “about thirty years of age ;” Luke iii. 23. John, the Evangelist, mentions a few other particulars, and informs us also at what part of the Jordan the baptism took place : “These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing ;” John i. 28. But in collating together all the facts relating to this great event, there are but two that will yield our Baptist brethren any sort of mere *inferential proof* that Christ was baptized by immersion. They are these : first, he was baptized *in a river* ; and secondly, the particular expression, “when he was baptized, he *went up straightway out of the water* ;” or, as in Mark, “And *straightway coming up out of the water* ;”—which they think indicates of course, that *he went previously under the water*. We think not. Let the following plain remarks be duly considered. First, the English words, “went up straightway (or immediately) out of the water,” do by no means imply clearly that Jesus had been plunged under the water, because they may with equal propriety apply to the act of *ascending the banks*

of the Jordan, after the administration was over. An exact following of the Greek text would lead to that interpretation, rather than to the sense so tenaciously adhered to by our brethren of the Baptist persuasion. "And Jesus, *having been baptized, went up*, straightway," &c.; or, "And Jesus, *being baptized*," &c. This latter is Mr. Wesley's translation, who makes a very frequent use of the aoristic form of the Greek verb. Thus the going up out of the water was *not a part of the baptism*, but a distinct act, *after*, immediately, or straightway after the ordinance had been administered; and so, of course, in no wise belongs to the administration. And in truth, the same thing is plainly enough to be gathered from our authorized version. Let us read it again. "And Jesus, *when he was baptized*, went up straightway," &c. Observe, not *while* he was baptizing, went up, &c.; but "when he *was baptized*," the ordinance being ended, "went up," &c. Indeed the word "straightway" alone fixes the sense; for that is *never* used in scripture, or in common conversation even, to denote *a continuation of an event or circumstance*, but always to signify a something *immediately consequent*. Now if immediately *consequent*, the coming up out of the water *cannot have been a part of the baptism itself*, but as much distinct from it as was the act of praying mentioned by St. Luke.—Secondly, The Greek verb *anabaino*, rendered "went up," never signifies *to emerge from under water*, nor has it indeed any reference to water at all. It simply means *to ascend*, or go up in any manner, as into a mountain; Matt. v. 1, xiv. 23: a house top; Luke v. 19: to the temple, which stood on an eminence; Luke xviii. 10: to climb a tree; Luke

xix. 4 : to go up stairs into an upper room ; Acts i. 13 : to ascend a chariot ; Acts viii. 31 : ascend to heaven ; Acts ii. 34, &c. &c. The word therefore has nothing in it appropriate to the act of emerging from under the water, but is strictly proper, and the most natural word that could be used, for coming up the banks of the Jordan when baptism had been received. The Baptist interpretation of the text, therefore, seems to be founded on an entire misapprehension of the text itself.

In addition to the above observations, it may be further remarked, Thirdly, That the ordinary way of employing water amongst the Jews as a means, or as an emblem of purification, was not by dipping into, but by pouring on. So “ Elisha the son of Shaphat poured water on the hands of Elijah ;” 2 Kings iii. 11. In like manner by laving, or plentifully sprinkling from the water in the bason, our Lord washed his disciples’ feet ;” John xiii. 5. So the anointing oil was poured on the head of the High Priest ; Lev. viii. 12, and xxi. 10. And because the water in sprinkling was not used sparingly—to sprinkle in the scriptures is of the same general import as to pour, and is considered as equivalent to *washing*:—“ Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be *clean* ;” Ezek. xxxvi. 25. “ Having our hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience, and our bodies *washed* with pure water ;” Heb. x. 22. The general mode then adopted by the Jews in their ceremonial and religious cleansings, was pouring or sprinkling. The only exception was that of the leper, who was required in private to divest himself of all his garments, and bathe his flesh in water, for which sufficient physical reasons may be assigned, without having recourse to any other. But plunging the body under

water *with garments on*, was a practice utterly unknown; and had it been common or appointed, the priests would have wanted an entire set of garments for that very purpose, besides those which are mentioned under the law. Wherefore seeing such a method had never been heretofore known, *what reason have we to think that John introduced it?* Where could he have obtained sufficient changes of raiment for the numbers whom he baptized in the wilderness of Judea? Would there not have been some reference to their robing and unrobing? At least in the account that is given of Christ's baptism? Or, can we suppose that he would have baptized the people in their own garments, and left them to travel home in that state all the miles from Bethabara to Jerusalem or Galilee? Considering therefore *who* and *what* John was, and the nature and design of his dispensation, it is far more probable that ancient modes would be adopted than new ones invented, so that the probability is that *pouring*, and not *immersion*, was the mode of baptism adopted by John.

The fourth reason which may be assigned for this opinion is a very just and satisfactory one: namely, that John's baptism was typical of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and his whole ministry and dispensation were designed to prepare the way for that blessing. Now whenever the prophets spake of gospel days, their choice phrase for describing the bestowment of the Spirit, in reference to the abundance thereof, is, *pouring out*. See Prov. i. 23; Isaiah xxxii. 15; xlv. 3; xlv. 8; Exek. xxxix. 29; Zech. xii. 10; Mal. iii. 10; Joel ii. 28, 29; and Acts ii. 17, 18. These two last-cited texts especially have given rise to the current phraseology of the Christian

church, in which believers of all denominations are accustomed to pray for *the outpouring of the Holy Spirit*. And with this gift baptism was to be most intimately associated, both as a means and a sign, as our Lord's words imply, "born of water and of the Spirit." And hence John's baptism so emphatically looked towards that event: "I indeed baptize you *with water* unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: *he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost*, and with fire;" Matt. iii. 11. Now the pouring of water upon the head or face is a much more natural and appropriate emblem of the *coming down* of the Holy Spirit upon a person, as upon our Lord and his Apostles, than the plunging of the body under water, and therefore we think it to be a far likelier method employed by John and the Apostles, than the practice of baptism by immersion.

On the whole then, when we take into united consideration all the above-mentioned remarks, we apprehend the facts of the case to have been nearly as follows. On some one memorable day of John's ministry, when his word had been attended with uncommon power, so that "all the people,"—perhaps the mass of the congregation, as though it were the harbinger of Pentecost,—were moved to repentance, and "about to be baptized," Jesus, who was "made in all things like unto his brethren," though "without sin," joined the penitent throng, as became "the friend of sinners;" Luke iii. 21; and they all moving on together towards the river, on reaching it, loosed off their sandals, and girded up their flowing garments: and standing on, or within, its margin, and leaning reverently forwards, John passed along and baptized the mul-

titudes by pouring water from the river upon their heads. Immediately after this sacred baptism, Jesus went up out of the water, or ascended the banks of Jordan, and bowed himself down to pray ; not for himself alone, but for those penitent multitudes also, and while “praying” in the midst of them, “the heaven was opened,” Luke iii. 21, as an emblem of his effectual intercession, by which they should all through him gain free admission to the throne of God, “and the Holy Ghost descended and rested upon him,” Luke iii. 22, singling him out from all the multitudes as the chosen and anointed Son of God. So that whatever knowledge John had of Christ before, it was now abundantly confirmed ; “and he saw and bare record that he was the Son of God ;” John i. 26.—34. Our Lord’s baptism in the Jordan, therefore, does not afford one particle of evidence in favor of baptism by immersion ; and if he were not immersed, neither were any of John’s disciples, since our Lord was baptized by John according to *his usual method*, and not after a *peculiar manner*, for the sake of distinguishing Christ from the rest of the people. For he was not distinguished from them by a difference in the outward administration ; but by the extraordinary and divine attestation of the Father, and the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, which “like a dove abode upon him ;” Luke iii. 22.

But there is a clause in the Gospel of John the Evangelist, which our Baptist brethren often quote with much assurance, as indicating the correctness of their views with regard to baptism, as sanctioned by John the Baptist. We read, “And John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim, *because there was much water there* ; and they came and were baptized ;” John iii. 23. Now

to a Baptist, the conclusion appears to be irrefragable, that John immersed his followers, otherwise what need of the remark that "there was much water there," for a very little water would suffice for sprinkling, or pouring water on them. It is enough to make us who differ from our brethren smile, when we observe the earnestness with which they cling to their interpretation of this text. It is instructive to reflect on the manner in which the understanding is often swayed by a certain set of opinions, when the thinkings of the mind run in a certain train, so that a casual remark shall appear to be equal to an argument amounting to demonstration. From this imperfection, common to humanity, no man, however great or good, is at all times wholly free; and some mixture of it may be discovered in every Christian denomination. A consciousness of this universal defect should promote a universal disposition mutually to bear with, and serve one another, and candidly examine the statements of Christian opponents, from a sincere and simple desire, as far as possible, to correct what errors of this kind may arise from the natural failings of the human mind.

Now with regard to the import of this disputed clause in the Evangelist, it may be said, First, That the interpretation of our Baptist brethren, is *mere inference—arbitrary inference*—and so concludes nothing in the way of argument in favor of their opinions. For it is not said John *wanted much water* to enable him to administer baptism, but only in an incidental way it is stated, that there happened to be much water in the place where he was baptizing. That this incident is recorded expressly to intimate the mode of John's baptism, is mere gratuitous assumption. Secondly, The verse immediately

preceding shews that the mention of much water had no reference to any mode of administration; for there we read, "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized;" v. 22. And the baptisms were not few; for some informed John, saying, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, *and all men come to him*;" v. 26. And again, "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized *more disciples than John*, &c.—though Jesus himself baptized not, *but his disciples*, he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee;" John iv. 1—3. Now these baptisms in Judea would have required much water, equally with John's baptisms, had immersion been the only mode, and yet there is no reference to such an incident; wherefore we judge, that the mention of it in the account of John's baptism, v. 23, arose from some other circumstance.—We observe then, Thirdly, That we have a key to that particular circumstance in the peculiar character of John's ministry, and the place of its exercise. Our Lord published his doctrines chiefly in cities, towns, and villages: "Let us go," said he, "*into the next towns*, that I may preach there also; *for therefore came I forth*. And he preached *in their synagogues, throughout all Galilee*;" Mark i. 38, 39. In like manner he sent forth first the twelve Apostles, and afterwards the seventy disciples, "into every city and place, whither he himself would come;" Matt. x. and Luke x. 1. "And when he had made an end of commanding the twelve, he departed thence, *to teach and to preach in their cities*;" Matt. xi. 1. And his sermon on the mount was delivered nigh

to a city ; Matt. v. 14. But John's ministry was short in its duration, and was exercised in *the agricultural districts* :—he was the voice of one *crying in the wilderness* ;” Matt. iii. 1—3 ; and the inhabitants of the cities went out to him. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan ;” Matt. iii. 5. And during the period of his ministry there was *a time of excessive drought*, as is evident from his food, “his meat was locusts and wild honey ;” John iii. 4 ; for locusts never swarm but in very dry, hot weather, and then they consume the remaining vegetation which the scorching sun has spared : compare Joel i. 4, 10—12, 18—20, &c. In such a season of scarcity and drought, to secure large congregations in the wilderness, he wisely chose places where there was “much water,” for at such a spot a vast concourse might be certainly calculated upon, both at the fords of the Jordan, and at “Ænon, near to Salim,” to which latter place he repaired, “before he was cast into prison ;” John iii. 23, 24. John's ministry then being exercised in the wilderness, or agricultural districts, (for that is the import of the term wilderness in the Gospels,) where “much water” was needed for the flocks and herds, any spot containing it would be greatly resorted to in a time of drought, and thither John was directed to labour and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. The mention of such an incident well agrees with the time and circumstances of John's history, and naturally corroborates the truth of the sacred records, and may be regarded as one of those *coincidences* so beautifully made subservient to a similar purpose by Dr. Paley, in his illustrations of the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles of St. Paul ; but it contains not a particle

of evidence to favor the opinion that John went there that he might find water enough *to dip* as many as were converted from sin by his powerful and efficacious ministrations. The theory is not in the text, but the text is *pressed into a subserviency to the theory*.

Since then *immersion* does not appear to have been John's mode of baptism, we do not think it was the mode subsequently adopted by the Apostles of our Lord. It is obvious that *no particular mode was prescribed* them, when they received their final commission; Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16. They were only commanded to baptize, but *how* is not recorded. The word baptizo is in itself *indefinite*, our Baptist brethren themselves being judges; hence their refusal *to naturalize* the word in their foreign, as hath been done in European, translations. Instead thereof they prefer *expounding it in the translation*, so as to make the sense clear and determinate in favor of their peculiar tenets, which is taking an unjustifiable liberty with the word of God, and an undue advantage of the ignorance of the native mind. By so doing, they must eventually injure their own cause, *for that ancient and sacred term will thereby be left in the hands of Pedit-baptists, and will remain exclusively in their translations*, which, as knowledge spreads, will greatly facilitate the views of those who maintain the opinions and practice of Infant Baptism. In 1 Cor. x. 2, sprinkling from the watery particles of the sea and of the cloud is distinctly called a being "baptized."

As John baptized by pouring, we think the Apostles also baptized in a similar manner. When the three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost, who can suppose that the vast labour was undertaken of im-

mersing such a multitude under water ? For they were baptized that same day : Acts ii. 41. What confusion and bustle must such an occurrence have occasioned ! *Would there have been time for it ?* Supposing the labour to have been equally divided between the twelve Apostles, each Apostle must have dipped under water, *two hundred and fifty persons*, an amazingly fatiguing service, especially when added to the immense exertions of the preceding parts of that day. Besides, to accomplish this object they must have separated into different companies, and resorted to different pools or streams of water, if they could have found so many, or had the command of them ; and even then, how could they have obtained three thousand changes of raiment on such short notice ; or, if plunged in their ordinary garments, what a spectacle would such a *dripping multitude* have exhibited in the midst of Jerusalem ! In short, the difficulties are so many, and the circumstances connected with the events of that day, so unbending, that it seems altogether incredible that the whole of the converts were baptized by immersion. How much more rational is the belief that they had water poured on their heads, even as in the case of our Lord, who, with the multitudes, had thus been baptized by John in Jordan ? How much more naturally would this represent the *descent* of the Holy Ghost upon them, as John in his baptism and ministry had foretold, and the Apostles themselves had experienced that very morning ; Acts ii. 1—4 ? How much more appropriate this mode of baptizing to the language of Peter's text :—"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh ?" Acts ii. 17.

And this being the mode then adopted, in conformity to John's practice, it would become from that time the customary method. So when "*on the Gentiles there was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost,*" Peter said "Can any man *forbid water*, that these should not be baptized," &c. Acts x. 46, 47 ; words which evidently refer to water being *then and there brought* for their baptism, and not to the conducting of the converts to water for the sake of immersion.—As to the hackneyed topic of Philip and the Eunuch's going *down into the water*," it is wearisome to dwell upon it, because the just and solid answer usually given is never noticed by our Baptist brethren. They argue as though they could not have gone "*into the water*," without going *under* it. Moreover they wholly pass unregarded the little word "*both*," in the text, "*and they went down both into the water*," Acts viii. 38, which makes it plain enough that *immersion* is not intended, for certainly *Philip* did not go under water, and therefore the convert did not ;—for the clause is to be understood in the same sense of each individual. Besides, the *act of baptizing was quite distinct from this going into the water* : and hence it is added, "*and he baptized him*." And as soon as they were *both* "*come up out of the water*, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip," &c. There was no getting ready of a bathing dress, &c. : the chariot stood still ; the convert and Philip descended, and entered the margin of the stream or pool, as the case may have been ; and having baptized him, as we understand it, *by pouring water on his head or face*, they came out of the water, when Philip was borne away, and the eunuch ascended his chariot and went on his way rejoicing.

There remains now but one figurative allusion to baptism to be noticed, which is found in the writings of St. Paul, and on which our brethren are accustomed to dwell, as decidedly favoring their opinion concerning immersion. "Know ye not," saith the Apostle, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are *buried with him* by baptism into death," &c. Rom. vi. 3, 4. And again, "*Buried with him in baptism*," &c. Col. ii. 12.—They consider that by immersion the body is *buried under the water*, and thereby the emblematic correspondence is accomplished to the burial of Christ, and the emerging from the waters to his subsequent resurrection, as the Apostle designed to intimate in that particular phraseology.—But this notion of burying by a momentary immersion is far too modern to agree with ancient customs. It may perhaps be thought not a far-fetched metaphor, an overstrained figure, to compare a *covering over* of the surface of the body in immersion, to the covering over of a dead body with earth in the grave, as in our burials. But then *that is not the manner in which our Lord was interred*. He was laid in an elevated niche of a fine vaulted tomb, hewn out of a solid rock, and a stone rolled to its mouth. He was not *covered over*, but *enclosed in* his tomb; so that the act of immersion bears no analogy to the act of sepulture, as it was practised by the Jews, or the burial of Christ in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; Matt. xxvii, 57—60. Consequently as there was *no literal analogy* between baptism and the burial of Christ; the word "buried," in Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, must be understood *spiritually*; so that to give it a *literal* signification, for the sake of accommodating it to a particular

mode of baptism, is *to wrest* the scripture from its true and proper import, and thereby put upon it an incorrect interpretation. In the inquiry, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" the meaning of the Apostle seems to be that, from our initiation into the church of Christ by baptism, we are bound by that very initiatory ordinance itself to the full and entire practice of the whole religion of Christ, for that we are baptized into nothing less than his death, faith in his death, that we may enjoy all the benefits of his atonement, and exhibit all that holiness his mysterious sacrifice was intended to bring into our hearts and lives. This is a view of baptism, and its correspondent obligations, that is very strenuously urged in this Treatise. When therefore, the Apostle adds "we are buried with him by baptism into death:" he does not intend to designate our *literal* baptism as a burial, but the *spiritual design and end* of that baptism as a burial, we becoming *spiritually dead*, Col. iii. 3, as Christ was literally dead when laid in the grave. Any thing less than this figurative or spiritual burial, shewing the Christian's entire deadness to the world, would fall below the dignity and force of the Apostle's argument, which is throughout the chapter to prove the high character, holy state, and exalted privileges of the children of God. And that we are correct in thus appropriating the term "buried," to a *spiritual* signification, and not to a *literal* act, as in baptizing, is evident from *the other figurative terms* employed in the verses immediately following, such as being "*planted together* in the likeness of his death," v. 5, and having "our old man *crucified* with him," v. 6, which no one thinks of interpreting otherwise than after

a spiritual manner, and therefore the being “*buried* with him by baptism into death,” must be interpreted in the same manner also. The mistake then of our Baptist brethren seems to lie just here, in supposing that the phraseology of the Apostle contains *an allusion to their mode of baptizing*; whereas we do not conceive that there is an allusion *to any mode* of baptizing at all, but only a pointing out of the great and spiritual purposes baptism was designed to accomplish, by leading all believers to real holiness, deadness to the world, and a new, spiritual, and heavenly life and conversation, through the death and burial of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection from the dead. If this great end be answered, it matters very little *how* Baptism is administered;—whether we be *sprinkled*, or whether we have water poured on us, as was the case with our Lord, and the first Christians: or whether we be plunged, according to the practice of Baptist churches.—The mode is of little moment, if the end be only secured—real, inward holiness, manifesting itself in all Christian virtues and graces, according to the commandment of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And now in drawing to the conclusion of our remarks about the mode of baptism, we are willing, for peace sake, to grant to our Baptist brethren the benefit of *a bare doubt, a mere chance*, that *perhaps* they may be right in maintaining that immersion was the ancient method; and we make that concession with a good grace, because *absolute certainty* cannot be claimed on either side. But we cannot go further than concede to them *the mere naked possibility* that their views are correct, while *all the probabilities of the case*, as we have drawn them out from the Holy Scriptures, according to our judgment, are

decidedly in favor of *pouring*, of which *sprinkling* is an abbreviated form. The essence of baptism, however, consists not *in the quantity*, but *in the use* of water, as the outward sign appointed and ordained of the Lord.—We shall conclude then this chapter with a general summary of what has been advanced. First, It is *possible* that baptism by immersion *may* have been the original method of baptizing by John the Baptist, and the Apostles. But, Secondly, It is *very probable* that the mode in general use was that of pouring water on the persons baptized. Indeed it is *nearly certain*, considering the customs of the East, that the Apostles and first ministers, never could have baptized *females* by immersion. Nor is it likely that children were thus baptized, especially as households were baptized at once, and mostly at the beginning in private houses, where the convenience of a bath, or some large place for immersion was not always to be had. And, Thirdly, Even if it were certain, that baptism was always originally administered by immersion, it would not follow that we are bound to carry out exactly *the same method* now, and that unless we do, the baptism is to be deemed, of course, as null and void. If such reasoning were legitimate and conclusive, the Lord's supper has long since ceased to be observed, and that Christian sacrament is no where kept in the Church of Christ; for who now reclines around a table as our Lord's disciples did, at the last paschal feast? And how many circumstances then observed are now wanting in the celebration of that commemorative and sacred ordinance? It must needs be therefore that the mode of administration does not affect the ordinance itself; and consequently in whatever manner any one has been baptized, whether by sprinkling,

pouring, or immersion, *he has been scripturally baptized.* Henceforth no man has any right to judge him, or trouble his conscience about so trivial a matter as *the mode* of his baptism, lest under the pretence, and perhaps charitable intention, of securing, he should actually hinder his salvation; and by evil reasonings about things of even less consequence than the paying of tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, he should call off his mind from the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, on the observance of which his everlasting salvation depends.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

We may now collect together a few practical remarks, of a somewhat desultory character, yet bearing on the general subject of this Treatise, and growing out of circumstances peculiar to our own time and age, which are of too great importance to be deemed unworthy of attention.

And first of all it is necessary to teach the people that *the registration of births*, as now required by law, is not to be confounded with [Christian baptism, or substituted for it. There is reason to fear that unless Christian ministers take pains to communicate instruction on this point, the new law will have that effect in hundreds of instances, especially in those parts of the kingdom where the ancestors of many families have been in the habit of neglecting Infant Baptism. This is one of the immediate consequent evils of the state separating itself from the church in its civil acts, and undertaking improvements in legislation without reference to religion. Marriages and births have now no more necessary connexion with Christianity amongst us than with Heathenism or Mohammedanism; such changes are rather to be regarded as *retrograde* movements in society than as advances in [civilization. It is true nothing is more common in great and popular assemblies, when the cause of missions to the heathen is advocated, than to hear the sentiment universally applauded,

that Christianity is to be the grand instrument of civilizing barbarous tribes and nations; and yet, strange inconsistency! multitudes who hold that to be a fundamental axiom in regard to foreign operations are very anxious to see Christianity *dissevered* from civilization at home. What we really want is, a much greater amount of holy and religious influence running through our whole international system of government,—an increase of pure Christianity, unmixed with party pride on the one hand, or party jealousies on the other,—a right good leaven, if one may say so, of Methodism, as to its genuine principles,—leaving parties in their relative position of rank and office pretty much as they now are,—and not a *diminution* of religious influence, by setting the people free from the outward observance of religious ceremonies, and affording them a plea for misunderstanding or neglecting Christian ordinances.

It might be thought very improbable that the people would confound things so essentially distinct as the registration of births, which is a civil act, and the ordinance of baptism, which is a religious duty; but so it is in fact, and thousands will be found in this nation, as the children now born grow up to manhood, who have never received Christian baptism, through the carelessness and ignorance of their parents, who, when once their children's names have been registered, will never give themselves any further trouble about the matter. We are apt to take the mass of the people in this kingdom to be wiser than they really are. But it is certain, that after all that has been done for their benefit by schools, and the numerous efforts of various religious bodies of Christians, there is a prodigious amount of ignorance amongst them, even on the very elementary principles of Christianity.

It is very necessary therefore that instruction on the nature and grounds of Infant Baptism should be occasionally given in every Christian congregation, not controversially, but practically, for the purpose of awakening the people's attention to a subject which they have heretofore been accustomed to observe in too many instances as a mere matter of course, and which they are now in danger of omitting as a matter of no importance ; that so, whatever becomes of the atheistical and avowedly infidel portion of the nation, and of their descendants, those who profess to be believers in Christ may not negligently suffer their posterity nominally to revolt to a mere state of heathenism. Were such an evil extensively to prevail, and to be accelerated in a second and third generation, the calamity would be great to our favored and happy land. For even a nominal Christianity is vastly to be preferred to a nominal Infidelity, since the former cannot exist without something of the life and power of Christianity remaining in some hearts, to revive its influence, and bring to bear at set times on the national conscience *the admitted principles* of the Christian religion, fallen into disuse and abeyance ; while a nominal Infidelity leaves you without any settled principles to apply, and sends you to search for them when you want their aid, and deprives you of an agency which God will own and bless, for Infidelity never retains within its precincts one agent whom God can own as the direct instrument of communicating good to a nation. Let therefore Christian ministers be awake to a sense of their duty, under existing circumstances, which they cannot control, and give to the Christian sacraments, and in particular to baptism, *a due proportion* of attention in

the course of their ministry, and not take too much for granted, as to the knowledge of the people, or the safety of leaving the duty of Infant Baptism to their own consciences. Conscience is often dull and apt to slumber, till aroused to a sense of duty by the faithful voice of living ministers, who are to be both the guides, and the guardians of the people, in what things soever pertain to their salvation.

Another point of great moment, and which has been much agitated at divers periods of the Christian church, remains to be considered, which is usually called the question of *baptismal regeneration*. Is baptism regeneration? Or, is the one *necessarily* connected with the other, *so as to be inseparable*? It is really surprising to consider what debates and arguments have been raised on this subject, till the matter has been completely mystified, so that the more one studies the controversy in human writings, the more he becomes bewildered. But how read we in the Holy Scriptures? It is an excellent practice to throw ourselves in every case of difficulty upon our original Protestant principles, and appeal to the infallible oracles, the pure and unalterable word of God. From that word we may gather light that will dispel the mists with which uninspired writers may have dimmed our understanding. First of all, we may take notice of that ancient rite under the Jewish church, so often referred to in this Treatise, and to which baptism substantially corresponds in the Christian church. We may then propound a correspondent enquiry as to that rite, and ask, *was circumcision regeneration*? Or, *inseparably* connected with it? And the answer is, *assuredly not*; neither the one nor the other; for the outward circumci-

sion was a different thing from the circumcision of the heart, as is clear from that standing promise written for the spiritual benefit of all those who were already of the circumcision after the flesh,—“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live;” Deut. xxx. 6. For want of that circumcision of the heart, most of those who came out of Egypt by the hand of Moses died in the wilderness, so that the one did not necessarily involve the other. And thus St. Paul testifies to the Romans: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God;” Rom. ii. 28, 29. And again to the Corinthians: “Circumcision *is nothing*”—that is, being alone,—“and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God;” 1 Cor. 7, 19.

Now these quotations will not be allowed as applicable by our Baptist brethren, because they do not agree with us in the opinion that circumcision and baptism have any such correspondence as we believe to maintain; and thus they deprive themselves of one branch of solid argument whereby to promote spiritual Christianity. But all who admit such a correspondence to be correct, have here, in the application of those scriptures to the case of the Christian ordinance, a full and decisive proof that baptism *is not* regeneration, or the circumcision of the heart; and that to teach that it is, *is a heresy calculated to destroy experimental religion*, and lead the people to rest in a form of godliness without the power.

In full accordance with these statements, we may next adduce the words of our blessed Lord to Nicodemus :—
“ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, *and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ;” John iii. 5. Here the two things are not confounded, but kept perfectly distinct; *an order* is preserved, the *one being a means intended to lead to the other*, while it is supposed that the former might exist alone, and then it would be utterly unavailing to salvation.

A like view arises from a consideration of the examples of baptism recorded in the New Testament, where it is evident that baptism was distinct from the inward work of regeneration, although in many cases very intimately connected with it, in the same way that all the means of grace, though they be not grace of themselves, are in many instances the channels of grace to those who use and attend them. For first, of those who were baptized, *much more was required than baptism itself*, even repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, *which are the immediate concomitants of regeneration*, and enter into its very nature, as our Lord explained to Nicodemus in his discourse about regeneration, when he said, “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;” John iii. 16. And all this was exemplified on the day of Pentecost, and in the jailer, and divers others. “ Now when they heard this, *they were pricked in their heart*, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, *what shall we do ?* Then Peter said unto them, *Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ*

and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost ;” Acts ii. 37, 38. Now there can be no regeneration without *a special gift* of the Holy Ghost, *beyond, and in addition* to his convincing power, whereby the conscience is pricked, and repentance produced, for it is a being “born of the Spirit;” John iii. 6, 8; and is not the *same thing with*, but *consequent upon*, baptism, provided also the baptized persons have the *prerequisite* and *accompanying* dispositions of repentance and faith in Christ. And thus Paul said unto the awakened and penitent jailer, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house ;*” Acts xvi. 30, 31.—Again, Cornelius and those who were with him, as we have already seen, *were regenerated before they were baptized*, and the baptism out of reverence to God’s holy ordinance was superadded to their regeneration; for thus “it became them to fulfil all righteousness;” Matt. iii. 15. Now this example, with which began the opening of the door of faith unto the Gentiles, and that not by the Apostle of the Gentiles, but by a minister of the circumcision, is a very decisive proof both of the distinctness of regeneration from the ordinance of baptism, and yet at the same time of the worth and importance of the ordinance, although, being alone, and without regeneration, it profiteth nothing.—In another passage of holy writ, we have an entirely opposite example recorded; for whereas Cornelius was *regenerated without baptism*, Simon Magus was *baptized without regeneration*, so that the spiritual grace did not accompany the ordinance; and Peter declared unto him that he “had neither part nor lot in the matter, for that his heart was not right in the sight of God;” Acts viii. 21. But if the doctrine or notion of baptismal regeneration be true,

Peter's awakening words were without point, and Simon had no need to have been alarmed, or to have desired Peter, saying, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me;" Acts viii. 24.

The scripture which at first sight seems most to favor the opinion entertained by divines who advocate baptismal regeneration, and who are for the most part of the Church of England, is found in the peculiar phraseology of Paul to Titus, where the Apostle calls baptism, "the washing of regeneration;" Titus iii. 5. But that particular phrase must not be taken up and descanted upon apart from the scope and connection of the whole passage, of which it forms but a limited portion of one clause only. The entire text must be read together,—“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;” Titus iii. 4—7. Now on these words of the Apostle, the following remarks are deserving of attention. First, He is writing of real, genuine Christians, as is manifest from the entire text, and from such expressions as the following in particular,—“he *saved* us”—“*being justified*,” &c. &c. Secondly, The Apostle is writing of baptism *instrumentally* and *no further*, and therefore he puts it *before* the “renewing of the Holy Ghost,” which latter clause exactly marks the distinction between baptism and regeneration, and of course affords the most

conclusive evidence that they are not one and the same. Neither doth he call baptism directly regeneration, but only "*the washing of regeneration,*" that is *instrumentally*, there being the same connection between it and regeneration as between the means and the end ;—a *conditional connection*, in so far as those who were baptized were capable of performing conditions, of which a renunciation of their own righteousness, in order to their being saved by divine mercy, was one. And no doubt many of those to whom the Apostle wrote actually did experience a divine and inward change of heart at the very time of baptism ; but that inward experience *accompanying* the use of the means, doth certainly prove that baptism was but a means, and not the end ; an appointed method of obtaining regeneration, and not the blessing itself. Indeed it is obvious that in the entire sentence, "*the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost,*" the Apostle had in view, and distinctly refers to, the parallel phraseology of our Lord, as to the necessity of our being born again of water and of the Spirit. And the most dangerous and ruinous part of the system of those who hold what is called baptismal regeneration is, that in truth *they do not hold regeneration at all*, nor have they any conception of its nature, though many of them be "*masters in Israel ;*" for with them the phrase is nothing more than a mere circumlocution for *simple baptism*, the ordinance being with them nothing more than a dead letter, unconnected with so much as an expectation of receiving the Holy Spirit, in the present days, truly to convert the soul to God.

On the whole then, it appears scriptural to conclude, that, in the commencement of the Christian age, the

greater part of those adults who applied to the Apostles and their helpers for baptism were truly awakened persons ; and so being penitent for their sins, and publicly professing faith in Christ, they commonly received in the ordinance of baptism some special token of the divine favor. In many instances they were at that time, and in that service, regenerated, or born again ; and to encourage the penitents to expect so great a blessing, and perpetuate the remembrance of it afterwards, the baptismal water came to be denominated “ the washing of regeneration.” And even where regeneration had been previously wrought, the administration of that divinely-appointed ordinance became a means of *confirming* them in the grace of God, and of strengthening the faith by which they were already saved. Yet that the connection between the ordinance and regeneration was *conditional and not absolute*, is sufficiently plain, not only from the instance of Simon Magus, but also from the principles and conduct of many unstable souls, who fell into those divers errors and corrupt practices, which the Apostles so earnestly opposed, as existing even in their own times in the church of Christ. But then because the ordinance might be used, and no saving benefit accrue to him who was baptized, it doth not follow that therefore the ordinance is unnecessary ; but only that we must be careful to use the means *aright*, and then the blessing will assuredly follow, and we shall receive “ the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls :” 1 Peter i. 9.

But what bearing, it may be said, has this on *Infant Baptism* ? Are infants regenerate ? And if not, of what use is the ordinance in regard to them ? To these inquiries it is sufficient to reply,—That it is impossible to

ascertain in what way, or to what particular extent, they may be benefited, either by baptism or prayer; *yet that they are benefited*, that spiritual good is often actually communicated to them, of which they are of course unconscious, need not be questioned, *because* the ordinance is specially connected with God's covenant of mercy in Christ with the children of men, *and because* he hath specially promised a blessing to the offspring of his people. But then we have no authority to affix to that good *the distinct term of regeneration*, which is a work wrought in most persons who experience it, at a subsequent period of life, although the seeds of grace, leading to regeneration, may then be implanted in the soul. No man living, perhaps, under the Christian dispensation, and in a land of Christian privileges, was ever yet able to trace *the beginning* of a work of grace to its *remotest* origin. What are called our first religious impressions, may be but the awakening of principles communicated to an infant mind by the good Spirit of the Lord at divers times, as well when the parents have been praying for their infants in the closet, or in the family, as when they presented them to God for baptism in his sanctuary. As the formation of the human body in the womb is a mystery, so are the operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul: we see something thereof as they are developed in human life, but the origin of them who can tell? But because *the term regenerate* is objectionable when applied to baptized infants, it doth not therefore follow, First, That it *never is* true: for aught we can tell it may be so in some instances, especially when infants are appointed to die in infancy. For as they must be regenerate *in fact*, though they *know not that fact* in this life, before they can enter heaven,

so God may choose often to honor that ordinance, and make its administration the time of communicating his mercy and grace to their sinful souls.—Neither doth it follow, Secondly, That if they be not regenerated in that ordinance, *they receive no benefit thereby* ; for by it they are brought within the bonds of the covenant, and besides their original right to hope for its mercy, arising from their relation to Christ the Redeemer, they have from that day forward a *special right* to plead for the fulfilment of all the covenant promises, of which their baptism is both a sign and seal to their souls. But forasmuch as it is impossible to apply the term regenerate indiscriminately to infants *with certainty*, seeing whatever grounds we may have for hope of general good bestowed, no one can know its precise character, and the subsequent unholy lives of baptized children often makes the correctness of the application more than doubtful : and since it is impossible so to define, guard, and limit its application, as not to endanger the salvation of multitudes, by naturally causing them to have a leaning towards the opinion that they are safe because they were regenerated in infancy, while it is evident they are yet in their sins,—surely no lover of souls will choose to employ the expression in regard to infants, but desire to see it entirely laid aside. *What is doubtful should be doubtfully expressed*, and not positively affirmed, any more than stiffly denied, in administering that holy ordinance to infants. On such an occasion, a *believing prayer for their regeneration*, is more appropriate than a *declaration that they are regenerate*, as a necessary consequence of their formal and just reception by baptism into the visible church of God. These views of baptism, and of regeneration, both with regard to adults

and infants, appear to have the sanction of the word of God ; but we cannot go further without treading on dangerous ground, and leading men away from Christ, and salvation, and heaven. “Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God ;” Matt. v. 8. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord ;” Heb. xii. 14.

In close connection both with the obligation of parents to attend conscientiously to the early baptism of their children, and of directing them to the right improvement of the grace which they may have received in that ordinance, and at other periods of childhood, is the duty of instructing them in the nature and obligations of the Lord’s supper, and of bringing them, if they manifest gracious dispositions, at an early age to the table of the Lord. As a general rule, perhaps, the ancient practice of the Jews, who brought their children at the age of twelve years to their feasts in the temple, may afford some guidance. Hence we read that when our Saviour was “twelve years old,” Luke ii. 41, 42, he went up to Jerusalem with his parents at the feast of the passover. Not that we are bound to an exact observance of any particular age ; much must depend on a variety of prudential considerations. But as baptism introduces children into the church of Christ, so a method of preparing them for an early and a regular attendance on the Lord’s supper, would afford an opportunity of constantly reminding them of their original baptismal obligations, and of their personal consequent duty, as they come to years of understanding and discretion. To the want of parental attention to this particular branch of domestic and religious training, more than to any other cause, may be attributed the amazingly extensive neglect of the holy sacrament in many religious

communities ; so that instead of an attendance thereon being regarded as a general duty, equally with an attendance on the public ministry of the word, it is thought to be binding only on the stricter portion of the Christian world, while the majority are at liberty to turn their backs on that holy ordinance without sin.

To the same cause also, in part, may be attributed a sort of superstitious notion of the extraordinary sanctity of the sacrament, which mingles itself with the views and feelings of many simple and pious people, amounting to a kind of awe and dread at approaching the table of the Lord, from a conviction of their unworthiness ; and so from a really conscientious plea of unworthiness, they disobey the plain command of Christ, who hath said in express terms to every one of his disciples, “this do in remembrance of me ;” Luke xxii. 19. Such an objection amounts to no more than this, when stripped of its disguise : “We will not obey Christ, because we are not worthy to obey him ;” and it is marvellous how any one who reads the bible can be beguiled by so poor a device of the devil into the neglect of an unquestionable duty. Whatever little acquaintance such professors may have of some parts of Christianity, it is idle to talk so much of their conversion, and experience, and enjoyments, when there is such an awful deficiency *in practice*. No one ought to imagine that he is safe, and flatter himself that he has peace with God, and is in a state of justification, who omits one Christian duty. If the reason for departing from God’s house on sacramental occasions, without communicating, were valid, the same persons might say, “We will not pray or read the scriptures, because we are not worthy to pray or read the scriptures ; we will not

attend church or chapel, because we are not worthy to enter the sanctuary of the Lord ;” and so the means of grace might be altogether forsaken. This is nothing better than a voluntary or an ignorant humility. It has sprung up and gained strength in the mind, mainly, from the circumstance of most persons never having had a word spoken to them in early life concerning the sacrament, so that when they began to feel some religious desires, they had every thing to learn concerning this ordinance, and but few means of gaining religious instruction in regard to it ; coupled with an observation of extensive neglect of the ordinance prevailing in others, from similar reasonings with those which have operated in their own minds.

If indeed so common an opinion, affecting so prejudicially real practical Christianity, were traced to its remotest origin, it would be needful to go back to many past generations. We should then find it germinating from the Popery of former ages, in which the sacrament of the Lord’s supper was abused to superstitious purposes, and the priests alone were allowed to taste of the sacred elements, while they propagated the monstrous absurdity of transubstantiation to the credulous multitude, and taught them to believe that lie with as much confidence as if it were the truth of God. If that absurd dogma were really truth,—if what that wicked priesthood affirm as fact were fact—then would the Popish priests be the greatest cannibals under heaven. A poor New Zealander would be satisfied with the leg or arm of a human being for one meal, but those reverend men gulp down body after body, legs, arms, bones, and blood, in the lump altogether ; they are not little petty retail dealers in cannibalism, but dexterously perform the matter in a wholesale way : yea, *and*

religiously too, whereas the poor savage does not affect religion in the business, for with him it is a mere matter of taste or hunger !!! O worthy race ! to be employed in the work of converting barbarians of distant continents and isles from *ignorance* and *cruelty*, when they can be so *religiously cruel themselves*, or *palm* so gross a tenet upon an ignorant and superstitious multitude at home. Now, though England has shaken off Popery, blessed be God ! and may that curse of nations never more recover ground in this our free and happy land—yet *the latent influence of her superstitions is not extinct*. The leaven thereof which remaineth will always find prepared for its operations the mind of the devoutly inclined, but imperfectly instructed, portions of the Christian community ; and the practical result will be that many, who ought to be regular communicants at the Lord's table, whom Christ himself would welcome there, will conscientiously keep away from fear of “ eating and drinking their own condemnation.” But it never strikes them that they expose themselves to condemnation by neglecting the plain command of their Lord and Saviour ; and thus a partial view of truth, as to the importance of a Christian ordinance, leads them into the practical error of shunning its observance altogether.

Were the rising generation duly instructed at home in the nature of the two Christian sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, *and of the connection and relation they bear to each other*, and conducted betimes to the table of the Lord, when hopeful indications of piety appear, a great point would be secured towards a more general attendance on the sacrament in this kingdom. And even where parents might deem it unsuitable to the

moral conduct, or spiritual state of their children at present to recommend or encourage them to be partakers of the holy communion, still the instructions given would not be lost; for besides the benefits that might result in future years, when by divine mercy they are turned to the Lord, even now, explaining to them their duty as baptized children, *with the reason of their unfitness* to become communicants, because of their impenitence and personal sinfulness, might be a blessed means in the hands of the Holy Spirit of producing conviction and godly sorrow that would terminate in faith and salvation. The Protestant churches of the Continent have a decided advantage in their ecclesiastical government of the young in this respect over the churches of Great Britain, although episcopal confirmation in the Establishment bears some resemblance to their practice. The Dutch Reformed Church, for instance, has an occasional set service at one of her public sacramental seasons, generally at Easter, for the reception of young communicants to the table of the Lord; at which time, the parents, who have long been accustomed to the duty, meet with their children in the house of God; and after suitable exhortations to parents and children, in connection with the sermon, they tarry together, and receive the memorials of their Redeemer's death, in token of their common hope in him who is their Saviour for all generations. The consequence of such a moral and religious training is, that amongst the Dutch population of South Africa, however remote they may live from a place of worship, the families will contrive to go unitedly to sacramental services, though they lose two or three days in journeying, besides the trouble and inconvenience of an absence from their busi-

ness and their habitation. Whatever may be said as to the mere formality of such services in many instances, where habit prevails rather than principle, and the danger of men's resting in such an outward performance of a Christian duty, without apprehending or feeling the necessity of the power of godliness, only goes to shew the importance of explicitly insisting on the inward kingdom of God, *along with the use* of outward means, but argues nothing against the propriety and utility of endeavouring to bring the rising generation amongst us to a juster sense of the value of the sacrament as a means of grace, than their fathers generally were sensible of; that so the form of godliness in all its beauty, and the power in all its saving efficacy, may be perpetuated, and more extensively exemplified in the churches of Britain.

Let parents then who themselves know the Lord, frequently inquire of a child, when of sufficient age:—“Child, do you not think that it is a Christian duty to partake of the Lord's supper? Do you not wish to enjoy so great a privilege? Do you not know that you were baptized in infancy, and that the vows of the Lord are upon you? Do you not consider that from those vows you can *never be released* by any act of your parents, or free yourselves? Do you not reflect that now you are old enough to take those vows upon yourself, and go up to keep the feast as Christ did, Luke ii. 41, 42, in remembrance that “Christ our passover was sacrificed for us?” 1 Cor. v. 7.—Such inquiries would lead a child to thought, to consideration, to reflection, to the gaining of instruction, and might be repeated on sacramental occasions, till the heart is won for God. And should conversion unhappily be delayed for many years, yet whenever that change is

experienced, this impression would be indelibly fixed in the mind ;—“ *it is now my duty, as I had often been taught in childhood, to be regular and conscientious in approaching at appointed seasons the table of the Lord.*” If any children or youths, who have been baptized in infancy, should chance to read the above inquiries, though they may not have been put by their parents, let them deeply and seriously reflect thereon. For they must not run away from Christ, after they have been so solemnly dedicated to him. It is their duty, *now at once* to resolve that they will cleave to him, and abide in his service, in his family, and at his table, to their lives’ end.—As to adults who have become heads of families, and, it may be, brought their own children for baptism, *while they themselves have lived up to the present period in total neglect of the Lord’s supper*, and so have never practically fulfilled the duties consequent on their own baptism, what must be said to them, or what can be expected of them ? Careless parents and a Christless household ! “Do ye thus requite the Lord,” who hath permitted you to be taken by baptism into a covenant relation with himself ; “O foolish people and unwise ;” Deut. xxxii. 6. Do ye thus *slight* your mercies, and make *no account* of your religious privileges ? Has conscience no power left ? It is time to awake to righteousness, or like father and mother, like sons and daughters also ; for if this ordinance be not kept in remembrance of Christ, both you and they, notwithstanding your baptism. are in danger of forgetting that you have a Christ to remember, and of perishing with all those who neglect the great salvation he hath purchased for them by his merits and death. Let this principle then be well understood, and firmly

fixed in the mind, and constantly felt in the heart, that if baptism be the initiatory Christian ordinance, *it is initiatory to a perfect and entire, and not to a defective Christianity*: so that baptized persons are not free to live as they list, but bound with holy bonds to learn all that Christ teaches, and to do all that Christ commands, that so all the spiritual blessings of his grace may be secured to them on earth, and the eternal glories and rewards of his heavenly kingdom in the life to come.

Finally, It is our desire to conclude by inculcating the principles of Christian moderation and peace with which we began this little Treatise. It is hoped that the subject discussed, and the manner of discussing it, will not prove unprofitable to the Wesleyan Methodists of the Bradford East Circuit, for whose benefit it is primarily designed, nor be wholly useless to any other Christian man or woman who may read these pages. If some of our Christian brethren in various places differ from us on baptism, much as we may regret what appears to us to be their error, and deeply as we may lament its consequences in regard to families and nations, so far as their acts and influence extend, still we must remember that they are our brethren; we must love and esteem them for their personal piety, admire and imitate their example in every thing practically excellent, unite with them in the performance of good works, and promote both in their churches and in our own societies, peace, order, quietness, good neighbourhood, and charity, to the utmost of our power. When assailed, we may once for all explain and defend from the word of God our opinions and practice in regard to baptism; but frequency of debate is injurious to personal godliness, and true spiritual Christian fellowship with

Christ's whole church militant on earth. It is therefore as much as possible to be avoided. If any man choose to be contentious, and ever harping on baptism and election, or what not, as though all religion consisted in a certain set of opinions, let him have the contention to himself. If one cannot get out of his way, he may be heard in silence, and when he is weary he will give over. But ye, beloved, continue steadfastly in the things which ye have heard and learned from those who have ministered to you in word and doctrine, ever remembering "that the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned;" 1 Tim. i. 5. Without such faith and charity, baptism, however administered, is utterly unprofitable and vain.

FINIS.

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